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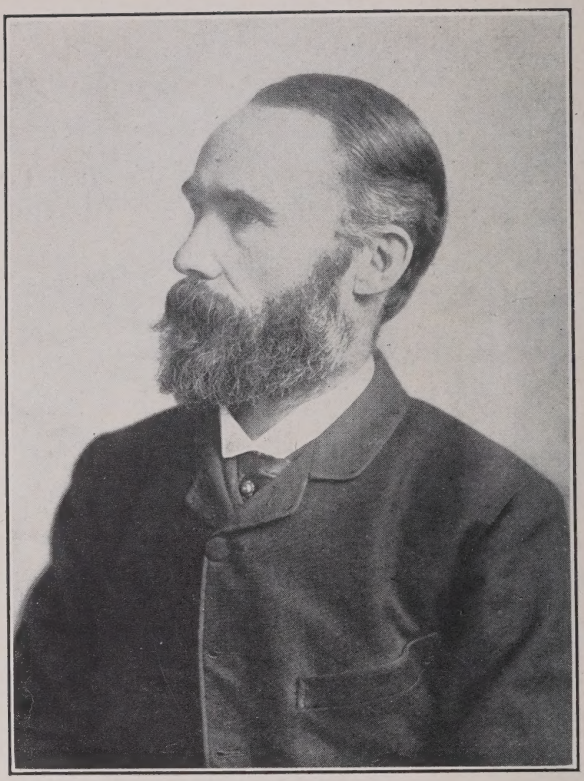

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SIR GEORGE W. ROSS

A Biographical Study

BY

MARGARET ROSS

"Let it be known there is a standard of honor and that there is a standard of manliness to be called Canadian which will be recognized as such the wide world over."—*Sir George W. Ross.*

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SIR GEORGE W. ROSS AND HIS TWO GRANDCHILDREN

DEDICATED TO

THE GRANDSONS OF
THE LATE SIR GEORGE W. ROSS

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This picture is significant in presenting a representation of the old days. The author, Miss Ross, is sitting at a spinning wheel used by Hon. George W. Ross's grandmother. The boy, "G.W.," is one of Sir George Ross's grandsons, representing his grandfather as he was at the same age.

PREFACE

TO the grandsons of Sir George W. Ross this book is lovingly dedicated by the author. If she should be fortunate enough to contribute encouragement even in a small degree, to any of the youths of our Province, to press forward because of her effort in trying to show them what industry, perseverance, energy and courage with high ideals did for the subject of this book, the author will ever cherish a deep sense of gratitude to the overruling hand that guided her, at the age of seventy-seven, through difficulties which had to be met in its preparation.

Her thanks are due to the publishers for their courtesy, and also to those who so generously gave their time and thought in contributing to the life and character of Sir George from their higher, broader and more important standard than she was capable of giving to the grandsons in her simple story.

To her niece, Mrs. Mattie Rose Crawford, she also owes her most cordial thanks for the time and care devoted to the general preparation of the book for the press and to proof-reading.

Being closely associated with her uncle, Sir George, in his home, while teaching in the Toronto Normal Model School, Mrs. Crawford was well

informed as to his aspirations and the difficulties with which he had to contend in his sphere as a public man.

The author has endeavored to do justice to the much loved subject of the book and with as few traces of bias as possible, and hopes her endeavor may meet with the approbation of the public.

MARGARET ROSS.

Sir George W. Ross

Chapter I

EARLY DAYS—THE FOREST HOME

1841

NEAR the River Aux Sable, in the County of Middlesex, Ontario, where the Highlanders had settled like flocks on the hills, George W. Ross was born. It was a rough-hewn cradle—a log house in the midst of the forest.

Nine years before this event—September 18th, 1841—James Ross and Ellen McKinnon Ross, with four little children, had come to this forest and carved out a log house of two rooms. One of the rooms served as a dining-room, kitchen and living-room, the other as a sleeping room. In the living-room was a wide, old-fashioned fireplace built of stones gathered from the forest and clay taken from the brook near by. On the oak mantlepiece, as if presiding over the house, were some relics of the home land—two brass candlesticks with tray and snuffers, and "The Book," which was taken down every morning and evening and read with reverence by James Ross (a good old Scottish custom) to his little family, which with the arrival of George numbered eight.

In the sleeping-room were three beds—on one side two tent beds curtained with spotless white; on the other side, an open bed for the boys, in which many a traveller was betimes made comfortable.

The Ross home was noted for its hospitality and for the inspiration that the little dark-eyed mother gave her guests.

It was a common picture to see Mrs. Ross, early in the evening, sitting by the fireplace spinning and at her feet a child wrapped in a pladdie, with spelling book in hands, crooning over his lessons while she sang softly:

"Oh, why left I my hame?
Why did I cross the deep?
Oh, why left I my hame
Where my forefathers sleep?"

Such was the environment in which George W. Ross was born.

The reason the Rosses came to Canada was the result of a movement for freedom that had its beginning many years before, and which first manifested itself in that dramatic and disastrous outburst of 1745, when the loyal Highlanders took up arms and made a passionate endeavor to restore Charles Stewart, "Bonnie Prince Charlie," to the throne of his fathers.

This outburst caused the British Government to make a determined attempt to destroy the feudal power of the Highland Chief. The old clan system

was shattered and an act forbidding the clansmen to wear the tartan or carry arms was passed.

The clan link thus loosened, the chiefs became sole owners of clan-lands of which they were formerly only patriarchial administrators. They gradually forsook the ancient duty of protecting their people. Some even evicted their tenants and turned their farms into sheep runs and forest preserves.

The pride of the clansman was thereby humbled and they became rebellious. At Culloden Moor, 1746, they were completely crushed and their hope of ever regaining their ancient heritage was blasted.

"The clans were a' awa', awa',"

So that emigration began westward, where they hoped to retain the freedom of their ancient heritage, so dear to them. Thousands of these brave Gaels, including many Rosses, left the Highlands for America between 1763 and 1775. "Go forward," due partly to the wonderful prospects in the new country over the sea, became the slogan of the Highlands.

Conditions in the home land were improving (in 1780 laws regarding tartans were withdrawn, but the old spirit of clanship did not revive), but not ideal, when James Ross began to plan for the future of his little family; so he, too, decided to push out, which he did, sailing for Canada in May, 1831.

James Ross belonged to the ancient family of Clan Ross, one which was greatly affected by the movement just described, since many of the Ross clansmen fought and died in the rising of the "Bonnie Prince." The history of Clan Ross antedates that of King Bruce, of Scotland, whose daughter married the fifth Earl of Ross. At that time the Earls of Ross held Rosshire and much of the adjoining territory.

In 1333 Earl William, sixth Earl of Ross, granted the Belnagown Lands of the Earldom to his brother Hugh. In 1375 King Robert II of Scotland, grandson of Bruce, confirmed this grant by charter. Then Hugh became the first of a long line of separate Lairds of Balnagown. On the Balnagown lands is the most ancient seat of the Clan, Balnagown Castle, on Cromarty Frith.

In 1476 James III of Scotland suspected John, fifth Earl of Ross, of intriguing with Edward IV of England, and confiscated, unjustly it is believed, his estates. The chieftainship then passed to the family of Hugh, first laird of Balnagown, and in that line it remains to-day. The clan itself is widely scattered. To keep the members of this ancient clan together Clan Ross in America was organized, 1911, with Sir Geo. W. Ross as its first president.

Sir George Ross is one generation removed from the Rosses of Edderton, eight miles from Cromarty, where several generations of his forbears were born. The Edderton Rosses were marked for their

high thinking and simple living, and for their readiness, on a moment's call, to rise in defence of King and Country or of Church—the Church of Scotland—and home.

When a young man James Ross moved to Tain, two and a half miles from Edderton. At Tain he conducted a shoe store, a business that before the age of machinery demanded considerable skill. He was a quiet, thoughtful man, intellectual and very observant. He was passionately fond of nature, a great reader and in one sense of the word was an educated man, though not stamped with the diploma of any particular school or college. Known in the parish as "the honest shoemaker," he commanded the respect and confidence of every one who did business with him.

James Ross married Ellen McKinnon, most of whose progenitors fell at Culloden Moor. When a very little girl her parents died, and she was adopted, by her own consent, into the home of the Rev. Laughlin Cameron, the minister of the parish in which her parents had lived. Ellen was beautiful, refined and attractive and as a daughter spent many happy days in the Cameron home, from whence she was married. So happy were her remembrances of days spent in the manse, that she resolved, if she ever had children, that she would try to be a real homemaker like Mrs. Cameron. According to the times Ellen McKinnon's prospects were good. She married well, as the saying went.

In due time a little family came. Though business was fairly prosperous, they felt the cramping conditions in the country, due in part to the breaking of the clans the preceding half century; and as they were anxious to give their family greater educational opportunities than the country afforded them at that time, they, too, decided to "Go forward."

In May, 1831, Mr. and Mrs. Ross, their four children, Isabel, Martha, Andrew and Willena, and their two nieces, set sail for Canada, making the trip in a sailing vessel none too staunch. They came by way of the St. Lawrence, landing in Montreal, the voyage taking thirteen weeks.

The route inland was in broad French boats—"bateaux"—propelled by Frenchmen; up the Ottawa River to Bytown (Ottawa), through the Rideau Canal to Kingston.

They arrived at Kingston in August, which at that time had a population of about 3,500, and was the chief navy yard. There they were met by friends who had left Scotland the previous year, and who advised them not to attempt to go farther west until spring, for owing to the difficulties of travelling they knew Mr. Ross could not reach the land on which he intended to settle and build a house before winter set in, so the family remained in Kingston during the winter.

Ross had purchased two hundred acres of land from the Canada Company, receiving a deed for the same signed by the Government and written on

parchment. The land was situated in what is now known as the Township of East Williams.

Canada in 1830 was fairly prosperous, in spite of the unsettled conditions that reigned throughout the country. The people had just recovered from the War of 1812-14. With their new-gained self-reliance they felt the limitations imposed upon them by the prevalent form of government. Agitation was in the air for a change. This agitation culminated in the rebellion of 1837.

In May, 1832, the Ross family started on their journey west again. From Kingston they drove by stage to Woodstock; this journey was broken by a rest over night at Muddy York, then the capital of Canada. On account of the bad roads the stage couldn't go any farther; so wagons were hired at Woodstock and from thence, over corduroy roads and various obstacles of all kinds, they proceeded by way of London, then the judicial capital of the district, to the Aux Sable River. The Ross family remained at the home of the land agent till their own home was built.

Their welcome in this new part of the country was expressed in the hearty co-operation of the settlers in building their little log house.

At the "raising bee" the logs were placed or lifted by a number of men into position, while men at each corner dovetailed them into each other. The openings between the logs were filled with bits of basswood plastered with clay. The roof was made of clapboards, split thin and shaved to

fit, held in position by poles paralleled to the roof. The chimney, funnel shaped, was made of sticks laid crosswise and plastered with clay. The floor was made of logs, split into slabs, smoothed on the upper side.

Evidently the Ross family had not realized just how primitive a life they would be forced to live, as they had brought with them from overseas a set of china, silverware, linen, bed and table, an extra chest of clothing for the bairns, and a few of the standard books, "Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress," Norman McLeod's Sermons, McCheyne's "Life and Works," Baxter's "Saints Rest," "Holy Living and Holy Dying," and Bibles—one for each member of the family. All of these things had to be packed for a time in Kingston.

In January following a new baby came to add to their joy. Baby Catharine came at a very opportune time to be presented for baptism—a sacred obligation which the pious Scotch parents had administred as soon as mother and child were strong enough to go to the kirk. The minister, as was the custom until a church could be built, was on the second of his yearly rounds among the settlers, and a service for worship was held at the different homes, the one at this time was held at the Ross home. The worshippers arrived before Mrs. Ross managed to put on her best gown, "as things on such occasions must be done in decency and order." So Mrs. Ross slipped outside and standing in the snow, changed her gown. Returning with smiling

face she proudly lifted her babe—the fifth to wear the christening robe, a present from Mrs. Cameron —and took her place before the minister.

The following summer a barn was raised with the same hearty co-operation as built the house. When the barn was finished the helpers asked Mr. Ross to have a dance in it. Mr. Ross was rather inclined to express his joy in quiet thankfulness, and dancing was not one of his accomplishments. Mrs. Ross, however, was present when the request was made and her merry, pent-up feelings were longing for expression. She loved the Scotch reels and the Highland fling; they were life to her. "Yes," she said; "come along, every man of you. Bring your lads and your lassies and we'll dance till we feel the spirit of the homeland taking root in the new."

In 1835 a house for public worship was built and a minister, Rev. Laughlin McPherson, ordained, 1849.

Under these comparatively comfortable conditions, three more children were born—Alexander, Ellen and George—George who was to show to the world what laudable ambition in educational lines could accomplish when unhampered by cramping circumstances, as in the old world.

Chapter II

EARLY DAYS—THE LOG SCHOOL

1846

GEORGE ROSS received his early education in a log schoolhouse two miles from home. The school had no appearance of comfort. It was lighted by three oblong windows at the end; nearest the door was the master's desk, and on the desk near at hand the taws, the chief instrument of education. On one side of the room was a wood pile, on the side opposite three rows of benches for the pupils. In the centre was a large box stove.

Sending George to school in London was considered, as may be seen from the following extract taken from a letter written to his brother Andrew by one of George's teachers, while attending the Medical School at Kingston in 1854:

"Please let me know how my little George is doing and if you have sent him to school in London; if you have not, you should. It will perhaps be a little more expensive than educating him at home, but never mind that; a good education is a better inheritance than a great estate. Give my kind respects to your father's family, Miss Helen, George and Margaret, my especial favorite. Still your sincere friend,

"C. McKenzie."

It was said that George was a restless and mischievous, but an apt pupil, and a great favorite on the playground. He was uncommonly inquisitive and seldom forgot anything he had ever heard or read. He was, in his early days, as in his later years, first and always "a bonnie fechter."

The strongest impressions of his childhood, however, were not those of school, but of days spent with his father "clearing." On "clearing days," at noon, the father would tell them about the birds and the flowers and the trees, and so happy were these memories that in order to recall them he visited every year, as long as he was able, the woods of his childhood. It was with the hope, no doubt, that every child attending schools might get at least a passing acquaintance with Nature that he inaugurated Arbor Day. And that the children would "catch the spirit" of the day he speaks to the teachers thus: "It is to be hoped that in addition to the comfort and pleasure derived from planting school grounds with suitable trees and otherwise improving them that Arbor Day will be used by the teacher to foster in his pupils a love for the beautiful and grand in Nature." This love for living things remained with him throughout his whole life; even in his busiest days he watched with zest the coming of a robin which for several years had nested in a tree near his library window.

On winter evenings the Ross family gathered round the big fireplace, busying themselves with homely tasks, relieving the monotony of these labors with stories and discussions. Among the stories that left the most vivid impression on George's mind were the stories of the U.E. Loyalists and the rebellion of 1837, as related by his father.

James Ross was alive to the movements of his time and was an independent thinker. He sympathized with William Lyon Mackenzie; the real Mackenzie; and the real cause for which he fought was clear to him. George was so stirred by the great man who was misunderstood that in later years, speaking of Mackenzie, he said: "He was the herald of constitutional liberty, with the fiery cross in his hand denouncing prescription and privilege and the insolence of office, and, as in the case of other heralds of freedom, he had to bear the scorn of his enemies and suffer persecution while the chariot wheels of freedom were being delayed."

The Ross children were trained to express themselves clearly and accurately. In those days they were dependent, to a great extent for news, on conversation, and a good conversationalist was highly esteemed (indeed, conversation became an art). Neighbors often dropped in to discuss the problems of the day. It was the keen desire of these early pioneers to lay the foundation of the New Country firmly, that gave George Ross the first idea of his relation to his country.

By the time George Ross had finished his early education, Canada had entered a new era. The battle for Responsible Government had been fought and won and the Act of Union (1840) had proved a success. Municipal government had begun to function, and so conditions, especially the roads in the townships, improved. Population increased, but education advanced even faster than the population. Under the Superintendent of Education, Rev. Dr. Egerton Ryerson, schools were built in every township and an increasing number made free. In 1849 the University of Toronto was freed from religious control, by an act passed by Baldwin.

From 1851 to 1858 the railway system from Sarnia, via Toronto and Montreal, to Portland, Maine, was built. In 1856 the Allen Line of steamers began to run regularly from Montreal to Liverpool, and in 1859 a weekly service was introduced.

Chapter III

YOUNG MANHOOD—TEACHER

1857

IN 1857 George Ross obtained a third-class certificate from the County Board and applied for the home school. He was accepted at a salary of eight dollars per month.

He entered teaching with all the ardor of his nature, determined to inspire his pupils with a love for studies. In this the young master, through his genial, happy way in helping them with their tasks and joining them in their games on the playground, won out. He thereby secured the confidence of both pupils and parents, which was remembered by them in later years.

In 1859 he obtained a second-class certificate, County Board. This same year a branch society of the Sons of Temperance was organized in the neighborhood. In connection with this society was a debating club, in which George Ross showed his first signs of oratorical ability. These meetings were renowned throughout the countryside for free fighting and good fun; so consequently were well attended and indeed were inspiring.

About this time John B. Gough made a tour of Canada in behalf of the cause of Temperance. His presentation of the subject gave young Ross a new vision of the liquor question and he saw "method in his father's madness," considered such by many in the neighborhood; for James Ross was one of the first of the early pioneers to take a strong stand against the use of liquor at "raisings" and logging bees. Liquor, he maintained, was the cause of delay and friction, and oftentimes of disorderly conduct. To these two men George Ross owed his strong temperance principles.

This same year Ross resigned his position in the home section for a position in the adjoining section, with an increase of salary—thirteen dollars per month. He remained in this section for two years, spending all his spare time studying, as he realized his education was very limited.

In the meantime a new interest came into his life—a sweet young girl with sunny blue eyes and golden hair. She believed he could do anything. He was fired with fresh ambition. Unexpectedly he was offered the school at Lobo in the adjoining township, at thirty dollars per month. Lobo, like East Williams, was a stronghold for the Reform Party. Ross had the good fortune to find a home with Robert Boston (who in later years became member of the Dominion Parliament), at this time one of the most enthusiastic politicians in the district.

In 1862 Ross married the fair-haired little girl—Christina Campbell. She was a true helpmate and went with him in the afternoon on busy days to take the junior classes, so that George might have more time to enjoy his home and for study.

Through the Lobo branch of the Temperance Society Ross gained a broader outlook on life and a special training in leadership, organization and oratory, as the teacher was expected to take the initiative.

"Among my personal recollections of Senator Ross, four incidents stand out more clear and distinct than any others," said the late Dr. C. Campbell, of London. "The first:—Time, somewhere in the later sixties; place, a little hall in the township of Lobo; the occasion, one of those social entertainments that were more popular then than they are now. Mr. John Cameron, then publisher of the *New Advertiser*, and myself drove out in the evening. Among the speakers were George W. Ross, a young man of local reputation, and the Rev. G. M. Milligan, who had a church in the neighborhood. I have long since forgotten what were the subjects on which they spoke, but there has always remained the deep impression made by young Ross, with a speech logical in its argument, clothed in beautiful language, enlivened by wit and humor. Mr. Milligan gave a good address, but I remember him more on this occasion as a

peripatetic orator who tramped restlessly from one end of the platform to the other while he spoke."

Ross at this time attracted the clergy, who advised him to take a theological course and devote his talents to the Church; but he did not feel himself worthy to enter what the Scotch considered sacred ground. Though it was the custom in Scotland for the youngest son to be educated for the Church, James Ross sympathized with his son in making his decision. His ambition for his son was a life of useful service in whatever sphere he chose. So Ross kept on teaching, taking part in public and social meetings as they came their round.

One morning, on his way to school, Ross met a friend who, noticing his sprightly air and smiling countenance, said: "Hello, Ross; what's up? Did you get an appointment to the Cabinet? Strike a gold mine?" "Better than that, Mac," replied Ross; "got the whole Cabinet, and a gold mine couldn't buy it." "Well, it sure must be something extra! What is it, anyway?" "Got a baby boy last night." "That is something worth while. Congratulations! Hurrah, another Grit! We'll need him right here, Ross; the Colonies must raise men of their own to look after their own affairs. The lad will grow fast." "Suppose you're thinking of the discussion we had last night, Mac, on Britain's Preferential Trade and the Reciprocity Treaty of 1855, eh, Mac?" "Politics is a great game, Ross, a great game," was Mac's reply.

The following letter written to Mr. Ross's brother, Andrew J. Ross, of East Williams, shows the simple way in which George W. Ross began life in his own home.

"Lobo, Sept. 18, 1866.

"Dear Bro.—

"I suppose you thought I disappeared rather suddenly at the time of the harvest vacation. I did intend returning after we parted that evening, but owing to the wet weather the harvest at Campbell's got behind, and so waited to help. Matters have now so shaped themselves that I will be entirely unable to go up for a long time, not having a horse of my own and not desiring to trouble the neighbors in the difficulty at present. My school is small. The whooping cough in the section keeps the children at home. Fortunately, our 'Jenny' has so far escaped. I do not intend to have a picnic in the school this fall. The crops are very bad, averaging about five or six bushels to the acre, as a general thing. In some cases they are better; in some worse. This damps the ardor for displaying pies, cakes, etc., and so we have to satisfy ourselves with humble fare. However, I have good times of it regarding the number of scholars and the actual amount of school labor. 'It is a poor wind that blows nobody good,' is the old saying, and the thinness of my school is an advantage to me from the fact that I require to study up for the winter's examination of teacher. I am about beginning a public 'crusade,' through the press, against our effete system of Local School Superintendence. Not only is the Local Superintendent officially a scoundrel—he pockets his wages and absconds, leaving the schools unvisited and the teachers unadvised—and so I contend if this office were abolished and a county superintendent substituted the interests of education would be mightly benefited and the public money not wasted. You will likely see

this idea extended and defended in the *Advertiser* next month. I want you to watch the line of argument pursued closely, and any hint, suggestion or illustration which you would suppose would be of advantage, to send it forthwith.

"When an agitation is commenced it is best to make it thorough and energetic. But time and space warns me to close. If you and Dorothy or you alone can find it convenient to visit us, please write to me before long. I think a more frequent correspondence during the winter would be mutually beneficial, and interchange of thought and sentiment gives rise not only to pleasant connections, but it breeds thought and sentiment; and what is mind but an aggregate of our thoughts? Let me hear of all matters of interest. How is father and mother's health and your own paternal connubial care? This leaves us all well—on my 25th birthday!

"Yours very truly,

"Geo. W. Ross.

"Please keep this *Globe*, so that I can get it again. Politics might be exciting next winter, and information will be invaluable.

"G.W.R."

Chapter IV

YOUNG MANHOOD—TEMPERANCE

1864

IN 1864 Ross was asked by the Sons of Temperance to give a short course of talks on Temperance throughout the Province, during his summer holidays. Success marked his every effort. Full houses greeted him everywhere he went. He also visited as many schools as possible during this tour. He must seize every opportunity possible to gain knowledge.

The last appointment on one of these tours found him in Glengarry, the very heart of the Highlands (though in Canada) he had heard so much about. He was delighted and surprised. After the meeting a grey-haired man with genial face came up to greet him, saying: "*Faill the amite connesoch ha seche*" ("Welcome to our town. How do you do?") Ross was pleased, and, though far from proficient in the Gaelic language, answered: "*Ha que maigh*" ("Quite well, I thank you.") Another man pressed forward and, grasping Ross by the hand, turned to the white-haired speaker, saying, "Did I not tell you he was a Scotchman, I knew it by the grip he took of his subject, and he can speak the Gaelic too." Then, addressing Ross, he said, "You'll just come hame wi' me the nicht, and we'll have a good crack of auld lang syne days. You may be Canadian, but your heart is Highland. I'll no be keeping you the noo (a number were waiting to

speak to him and bid a true Highland "guid nicht"). I'll first gang for my democrat and wait for you at the door." Mrs. McCraig gave her guest a real Scotch welcome. "Come awa' ben," she said, in a cheery voice, after giving him a real grip of the hand. "You are just tired out, and it's a wonder you are not deafed with my guid man. He's just that dottled when he meets a man that speaks the Gaelic." "Hist you," interrupted McCraig; "she is just the worse hersel'. Come awa' ben, and get a cup of tea. I'm sure you are needing it after your journey, and then the meeting."

But Mr. Ross was not to enjoy any longer his almost unalloyed happiness, for next morning (his work as planned was not yet completed) he was suddenly called home to face the first real sorrow of his life—the death of little Jim, his baby boy.

Ross's tour at this time had evidently, judging from the following conversation, made him begin to value "Preparedness"—a marked characteristic shown throughout his whole life. Ross was visiting his parental home. "Well, Matael" (Gaelic for "my dear") said Mr. Ross's mother, "and how did you like the Glengarry folk?" "A' richt, mither" (answering in Scotch just to please her), replied Ross. "They're true Highlanders, mother, and cheer fine; but somehow they made a fellow feel (if he would carry a clear conscience) that he had to know his speech as well as they knew the twenty-third Psalm." "And there's na need for onything else, George," was Mrs. Ross's dry reply.

Chapter V

YOUNG MANHOOD—POLITICAL INITIATION

1867

IN THE first election after the British North America Act, 1867, Ross's friends proposed to nominate him for political honors—a seat in the House of Commons. The very thought of such a step was overwhelming to Ross. He was, however, urged to attend the convention in North Middlesex and come before the public. This he did. Diverse were the opinions as to the advisability of bringing Ross's name before the convention as a nominee. The matter was casually mentioned after church the Sunday preceding the convention. Mr. — sneeringly remarked: "That little upstart presuming to present himself as a candidate for Parliament!" to which remark came the retort from Mrs. —:

> "Could I in statue reach the pole,
> And grasp creation in my span,
> I'd still be measured by my soul;
> The soul's the measure of the man."

At the convention Ross's courage almost failed him when he faced the trim old electors who had voted at elections before he was born. There were only two nominations, Mr. Thos. Scatcherd, of London, and Ross.

The first nominee's speech was received with loud applause. Ross's on the other hand, was not received so cordially, due partly to his extreme boyish appearance. He made, however, a good impression on his friend Sandy Hudson, of McGillivray, who, in congratulating him on his speech, said: "Never mind them, Ross. Don't get discouraged. You'll make those fellows sit up yet, and they'll be glad to listen to you." Ross expresses his feelings after this meeting thus:

"My speech was moderately successful, but the vote of the convention was ten to one for Scatcherd, just as it ought to have been. How could I expect to reap where I had not sowed? But if little was gained I felt that nothing was lost, I was 'advertised' as an aspirant for Parliamentary honors."

Speaking of this experience, Ross says "On the whole it was a strange experience. It was my first encounter with that curious abstraction called the 'public,' which was a force to be reckoned with. What was the secret of its power?

"I had caught the infection of publicity, for which the remedy seemed to be more publicity—*similia, similibus curantur.* 'Why not try journalism?' I said to myself. Who so conspicuous as an editor? That will fill the aching void. Who can steal his thunder? With one dash of his editorial pen he can make havoc in the enemy's ranks and at the same time win the admiration of a confiding public. That's the golden fleece to be sought at once." And Mr. Ross did try journalism.

Chapter VI

YOUNG MANHOOD—EDITOR

1867

THE FOLLOWING June Mr. Ross bought out the Strathroy *Age*—a small four-page weekly founded the year before. It had a circulation of three hundred and fifty. The whole equipment was valued at six hundred dollars.

Speaking of his responsibility at this time, Mr. Ross said: "There were only a few who supplemented the local papers with the larger metropolitan dailies. The editor of the weekly was therefore 'a guide, philosopher and friend,' as well as a medium of news within the orbit of his subscription list. And so he had editorials on matters of public policy, on politics, national and municipal, and on many matters of wider interests than the town council or the proper location of the town pump.

"Locally the weeklies are a sort of vigilance committee, and many a municipal councillor and school trustee act and vote with an eye to the paragraphs in the weekly paper which his conduct may suggest. Even the lighter society gossip of the town, the arrivals and departures, the home visits of old citizens and the gaiety of young brides passing on into the world, have about them a human

touch which appeals to everybody and which relieves the monotony of shop and office and fireside. The weekly has still its place in the newspaper economy of the world, and to use it for the highest good is an ambition not unworthy of the altruist and the educationist."

At the time Ross assumed control of the *Age*, the political atmosphere was highly charged with excitement. The first general elections after Confederation were about to take place. This gave Mr. Ross an excellent chance to gather news for this great weekly, as he jocularly named the *Age*.

As soon as the Governor-General learned that Her Majesty Queen Victoria had given (March 29, 1867) her assent to the British North American Act, he called Sir John A. Macdonald to form a government for the Dominion and Hon. John Sanfield to form one for the Province of Ontario. Both of these leaders formed Coalition Governments, Sir John A. Macdonald (Conservative) taking into his Government two strong Liberals, Hon. W. H. Howland and Hon. Wm. McDougal, while Hon. Sanfield Macdonald (Liberal) gave a place in his Government to two Conservatives, Mr. Matthew Crooks Cameron and Mr. John Carling, a step indeed that was contrary to the expressed opinions of the Liberal party. Both these leaders appealed to the country; the campaigns were run simultaneously with the declaration that Confederation had dissolved the "old parties" and that there were no political issues

before the country. Neither of the leaders promulgated a new policy or a party platform; they simply called for a "Fair Trial."

Mr. George Brown, who had withdrawn in 1865 from the Coalition Government because he thought Sir John A. Macdonald ignored his opinion on certain important issues, was the Liberal party leader. He dissented strongly from the views held by the Premiers of both the Dominion and the Province. He claimed that the parties had coalesced to bring about Confederation, and now that Confederation was assured the parties automatically resumed their former position. Then Mr. Brown could not trust any one, much less a Premier who was opposed to representation by population, even if he favored non-sectarian schools—the stand taken by Sanfield Macdonald—and again Brown knew that Sanfield Macdonald was under the spell of Sir John A. Macdonald's power, an influence neither used in behalf of the best interests of the country, and so the country could be served best by their defeat.

"To rouse his followers to give battle as of yore, Mr. Brown," said Ross, "called a convention of Liberals of the Province to meet in Toronto on June 27 (1867), to consider what should be done to prevent the success of Sir John A. Macdonald's new party tactics. About six hundred responded to the call, and for three days the temperature of the old Music Hall on Church St. would be considered a comfortable average for a summer resort. As the

editor of a Liberal newspaper I was a qualified delegate to the convention, to which I looked forward with unusual interest. Now it was not the red schoolhouse work, its restless occupants glad to escape from its restraint (the teacher often no less than the pupils), but the political stage with some of Canada's greatest men behind the footlights.

"The Demosthenes of the Convention was undoubtedly George Brown. His manner was so intense, because of its flaming earnestness, as to overshadow the cogency and force of his arguments. His leadership at the convention reminded me of the words of Macbeth: "Lay on, Macduff; and damn'd be him that first cries 'Hold, enough!' and, "sad to say, as in the great drama, Macduff prevailed."

Ross greatly admired his daring, his fighting for principles he believed to be for the best interests of his country. The *Age* weekly was perhaps never as great as when it reported this historic convention.

During the campaign Ross attended many meetings in the three ridings of Middlesex. His interests, however, were, as he said, centred in West Middlesex, where he hoped to make his powerful editorials tell on the election.

The Liberals in both the Dominion and the Province were beaten (by sixty-eight and one respectively) notwithstanding the great convention in Toronto, and the Liberals in West Middlesex were beaten, notwithstanding Ross's "powerful editorials." Speaking of this election, Ross said:

"The Liberals were beaten, the great weekly was beaten, and the intelligence of the electors was graded thereby."

Ross put in two strenuous years of work on the *Age*, but, as he says himself, "In spite of every effort to economize by soliciting advertisements, writing editorials, reporting political meetings, gathering social notes—in fact doing in short the work of several men rather than the work of one, I could not make the paper a financial success, so sold out and took a partnership in the Seaforth *Expositor*."

In 1869 Ross attended the Normal School at Toronto. In 1871 he obtained a first-class provincial certificate and was appointed School Inspector of East Lambton.

Chapter VII

YOUNG MANHOOD—INSPECTOR

1871

ROSS took up his duties of School Inspector in the summer of 1871. The work appealed to him and he found he was well adapted for it. His visits were always looked forward to with pleasure by both pupils and teachers. Speaking of his visits, a Strathroy teacher says: "The so-called stupid girl or boy always appealed to Ross. He always studied the individual." Mr. Ross's motto in dealing with children was "A Merry heart doeth good like a medicine," and Ross was merry. He was not afraid to have a good laugh with the pupils, to whom he always gave the glad hand, and wherever he went sunshine went with him.

One of the Toronto Model School teachers told the writer the following story:

"When I was a little girl attending school in Petrolia, I used to sneak up to the very front seat the day Mr. Ross came to visit, so he would smile at me and pat me on the shoulder or cheek as he passed by my desk. It was through his inspiration that I kept on working till I got my honor matriculation."

The following story has also been told to the writer by Miss Mary Armstrong, one of Sir George W. Ross's first teachers:

"My first recollections of the late Sir George W. Ross date back to the early years of my teaching, when as our Inspector he visited my room.

"I can well recall his first visit, because upon the impressions left at that time depended largely my future success as a teacher.

"During that first visit he came in personal touch with each child. He had a wonderful faculty of reaching the hearts of the children, as in later years he reached the hearts of men.

"In his inspiring talk to the children he made them feel that the future greatness of Canada depended upon them; but while they were Canadians they must never forget that they were British subjects. While Canadian at heart, Sir George was too great a man to be merely national. His viewpoint was empire-wide, and in later years he became an ardent Imperialist.

"In his closing words he told the children they were now preparing to go out and help make Canada the best country in the world. He then, in strong, vigorous tones, said: 'Prepare, prepare, prepare, and again I say prepare.' With a bright 'good morning,' he was gone. We sat in silence until the distant echo of his footsteps was lost in the building, before we resumed our work. But the echo of that word 'Prepare' kept ringing on down through the years, and the message he leaves to-day is 'Prepare.'"

An Inspector's work in the early days was doubly hard on account of the bad roads. Some

were newly opened, and indeed the best were far from present-day standards. This often necessitated the use of the saddle. Hotels were not so generally patronized then as now, and Ross oftentimes had to suffer from cold sleeping apartments, and even at times a damp bed. He received, however, much kind hospitality, and made many warm friends who stood by him always.

Chapter VIII

PROVINCIAL ELECTION

1871

ALTHOUGH accepting the position of Inspector, Ross's ultimate aim was to enter the legal profession. He had already begun work with that end in view. "Time enough to enter politics when I have a profession to fall back on," he said. The tide, however, changed, and Ross was plunged into politics. Elections for the second Provincial Parliament were set for March 21, 1871. The Sanfield Government was once again to be on trial. Alexander Mackenzie, member of the House of Commons, was nominated to contest the riding of West Middlesex in opposition to the sitting member, Nathaniel Currie. Ross by this time had acquired an enviable reputation as a speaker (*The Globe*), and he was asked to address a few meetings in behalf of Mackenzie.

Hon. Edward Blake, leader of the Government Opposition, made a party cry of what was perhaps the weakest plank in the Sanfield Government, viz.: "That Public Institutions should be located in recognition of political support." Macdonald was also charged by Blake with substituting executive for parliamentary control, as was actually the case when he voted down Blake's resolution

to submit every Order-in-Council granting railway aid to the Legislative Assembly for ratification—a serious departure from Liberal principles—and the Liberal party still felt, as stated by Hon. Alexander Mackenzie to the electors of West Middlesex, that "The Government of Ontario had been from the first the mere creature of the Dominion Government, existing by its sufferance and subject to its control." Notwithstanding all this the Sanfield Government had served the people well, and Mr. Currie, the Government candidate, had good reasons to expect re-election. Alexander Mackenzie, though a stranger in the riding, was well known through the press. He was a canny Scot and a powerful debater, and won at once the confidence of the electorate. Mr. Currie was defeated. Mackenzie's majority was four hundred. and ten. Reporting on this election Ross said: "It was a glorious victory, and even the ranks of Tuscany could scarce forbear to cheer. To me the campaign was an education in two ways: I gained some experience in platform work, and I had the opportunity of studying the platform methods of an acknowledged champion of debate." The Sanfield Macdonald Government was returned by a small majority, but was short lived. Mr. Mackenzie was a strong support to his skilful leader, Mr. Blake, and together they were too strong an opposition for the Government.

After a session of eleven days, during which repeated votes of want of confidence were moved against the Sanfield Macdonald Government, Parliament was dissolved. A new Government was formed under Blake, December 14, and Mackenzie held the portfolio of Provincial Treasurer.

The following year, 1872, both Blake and Mackenzie resigned their seats in the Ontario Legislature. By an act of the Dominion Parliament, 1872, members of the Provincial Legislature were disqualified from sitting in the House of Commons.

Oliver Mowat succeeded Blake as Premier of Ontario.

Chapter IX

NOMINATION AND ELECTION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

1872

A GREAT surprise was in store for Mr. Ross. He had received the nomination of the convention to contest the riding of West Middlesex, against A. P. Macdonald, the sitting member in the House of Commons. This was for the Second Parliament of Canada.

"Macdonald," said Ross, "was in some respects a formidable opponent. He had many years of experience in Parliament; he was much better acquainted with the electors than I was; he knew all the arts of electioneering; and for a young man, inexperienced and without the sinews of war, to hope to defeat him was tempting the fates."

The thought, however, of meeting such a formidable opponent made a certain attraction; the fight itself would be worth while, even if defeated. Then, too, the Liberals had pledged their loyal support. But—he hesitated. His home needed him. A great new joy had come into his home just at this time—Baby Duncan, and the little mother had not yet regained her strength. Would a new venture on his part react on her chances for a speedy recovery? The urge was strong, and finally

he yielded, taking the precaution first, however, to send Mrs. Ross home to the farm where she would have every care and also be spared from daily reports of meetings.

Candidates for political honors, at that time, always issued an address declaring their ideas on the questions before the country, and asking the electors for their vote and influence. Among the measures Ross promised to support were an Election Law for the Dominion; abolition of dual representation; economy in payment of salaries; reduction of tariffs and customs; protection of territorial rights; opening up of the best markets for Canadian produce; the renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty with the United States, etc., etc. He closed his address thus: "These and similar measures, no matter where they originate, will receive my hearty support. Canada for the Canadians, made prosperous by good Government, honesty, industry and public morality, will be the aim both of my life and of my legislation."

Ross's opponent was confident in his strength. He simply scoffed at measuring swords with a school boy, as he called Ross. Macdonald could not guage Ross's ability, nor had he anything to lay to his charge, but obscurity—a country school teacher, an audacious upstart! To crush Ross, Macdonald said, would not even require a decent sized sword—a popgun would do.

To make sure of his victim, however, Mr. Macdonald, through certain friends, prevailed on Dr.

Billington, whom he had defeated in 1867, to announce himself as Independent Liberal and enter the contest.

Ross feared the division of the Liberal votes. But he had entered the contest, and would not go back on his friends. "Defeat," said Ross, "is not necessarily disgrace—cowardice is." So, marshalling all his powers, with indeed sometimes the energy of despair, Ross entered the contest.

The following story is current in West Middlesex: "At a meeting in the beginning of the campaign Ross was called down for being an impertinent ignoramus aspiring to Parliament without any more experience than a herd boy." Replying, Ross said, 'I have read in The Book of a herd boy who slew a giant, cut his head off and put an army to flight. The honorable gentleman had better look out for *his* head.'"

"Ross," remarked George McBeth, after this meeting, "the boys say you're gaining ground. Take heart, man; the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong. Both you and Mrs. Ross, we trust, will come out all right." Ross was encouraged, but the strain was intense. Mrs. Ross had not, as he had hoped, gained from the change. Every night he could possibly spare he spent at the farm. The doctor (Dr. Thompson, Senior) had diagnosed the trouble as a case of low fever. Driving home to Strathroy with him one night, Ross, who was overwhelmed with fear on account of his wife said, "Doctor, I can't go on.

It's sure defeat; you must find another man to take my place." The doctor, who was an old friend and one of his strongest supporters, replied: "You're taking it too hard, Ross. I allow it is trying. You have my sincere sympathy. Mrs. Ross's case is not at all hopeless; she has had perfect health heretofore. I can see no reason, so far, why she should not recover from this. I will bring Dr. Edwards out with me in the morning for consultation, and we will watch every symptom. She has every care in her father's home. It is impossible for us to get another candidate. The election date is set; we have just three weeks to work on. You must reconsider; your own interests are at stake. You do not know what this may mean for you and your family." Ross was very much disturbed. He understood the situation. It would not, he concluded, be right, as the doctor said, to forsake his party at this late hour; there was no choice. He must face the battle with all its uncertainties and cares.

"His not to reason why;
His but to do or die."

The difficulties of conducting an election fifty years ago were great. Newspapers were comparatively few, and their circulation limited, year books with official statistics and *Hansards* were not published then. It was also difficult to get (unless one had a friend in the office) access to the Journals of the House. So the only way in which the electors could be given instructions on the

leading questions of the day was by personal canvass, and through public meetings held in public halls and schoolhouses. The accommodation in these places was generally very inadequate. This necessitated the holding of many meetings (not an insurmountable difficulty for a young man) before all the electors could be seen. During this campaign Ross addressed thirty-five meetings, but Ross's difficulty (not having official literature to scatter) was to prove statements made regarding his opponent, who, because of his experience in the internal workings of the House, was hard to face. Statements made by party newspapers counted for very little with the opposite party. Another story current in the riding, and indeed retold by Ross himself to the writer, is that on one occasion, when the meeting was surcharged with "political electricity," Ross accused his opponent of voting with the Government which had, when adjusting the tariff for revenue purposes after Confederation, imposed a duty on Bibles. "Not being able," said Ross, " to procure a copy of the Journals of the House containing the division list, I could only cite in proof of my charge *The Globe*. My opponent denied the charge point blank, and challenged me to the proof. I was convinced that the charge was true, and if proven by documentary evidence I felt the electors of strong religious convictions might possibly resent it. As a last resort I wrote to the Collector of Customs in the City of London, and received a reply to the effect that

duties were imposed on Bibles and hymn books in 1867, but were repealed in 1869." Armed with this information, Ross renewed his charge at a joint political meeting held in the town hall, Strathroy. "Macdonald was still game," said Ross, "and declared I was wilfully and maliciously misrepresenting him, and in proof he drew from his wallet, with an air of bravado, what he alleged was the Official Blue Book of the Dominion Government, in which it was stated that Bibles, Prayer Books, etc., were free, shook the Blue Book in my face and asked the audience to condemn me as a prevaricator and slanderer. My position was for a moment very embarrassing. Was it possible the Collector of Customs had made a mistake? I must see this Blue Book for myself, and so I jumped to my feet, and asked Macdonald to let me see it. 'No, no!' was the reply, and, speaking with more than his former vigor, went on to brand me as unworthy of respect. I reached up and snatched the book out of his hands, and in an instant perceived that his authority was not a Blue Book at all, and holding it up to the audience I read from the cover, 'MacLean's Almanac, 1869,' and threw it down on the table before him. It was enough. His friends were dumbfounded and my triumph was complete."

Had it not been for Ross's discourtesy in snatching the almanac from Macdonald, he certainly would have been branded as a knave. Was not his action justified?

On another occasion the story, as reported, is that Ross again charged his opponent with voting against the interests of the people. Macdonald had cast his vote in with the Government against the free importation of live stock for breeding purposes. Mr. Macdonald's supporters cried, "Prove it, prove it!" Mr. Ross responded at once by reading the resolution of the House at the time, and the division list, in which was the name of his opponent. The excitement was intense. Speaking of this episode, Ross said, "I was not sure for a second or two what part I might be required to play to vindicate my good name. However, the electric storm soon passed, and no serious damage was done."

The meeting over, Ross, weary and heart-sore, hurried away to the farm to watch by the bed of the little mother who was battling for her life. Mr. Ross remained all night, and early in the morning returned to Strathroy, very much discouraged, and before going home called at the doctor's office to report. "I fear, very much, doctor, Mrs. Ross is not going to recover," said Ross, addressing Dr. Thompson. "Mrs. Ross looks to me as if she were sinking, and she is so weak!" "She will look like that at the turn of the fever," replied the doctor. "We are just going to start out to see her; I will come and report to you when I return. Meantime you go home and go to bed and rest; you have to speak to-night." A last appointment for a meeting to be held at Mt.

Brydges had been arranged. "I feel so distracted, doctor, I cannot go and speak at that meeting to-night." "Oh yes, Ross, you will. Go home and rest. At the crisis the patient goes down so low it's just hard to tell; but if tided over a few hours, it is for the better." With that the doctor left, and Ross went to his home. When the doctors returned they gave Mr. Ross good hopes and told him they would go out again in the evening. By that time they hoped, they said, to see a decided change for the better; if not they would not expect him to go to the meeting. This was the last meeting of the campaign. Ross spent an anxious afternoon with his three little children, who chattered away, wondering, though, why daddy was so quiet and why he did not, as usual, romp with them. When the doctors returned in the evening they were quite encouraged. The crisis was over, they thought, and Mrs. Ross was resting quietly. On the strength of the doctors' report, yet with a dread sense of foreboding, Mr. Ross left for Mt. Brydges. He found a packed hall and an excited crowd awaiting him There seemed to have been a prearranged party to make disturbance by interrupting the speaker. By the close of the meeting the excitement grew so intense that Mr. Ross's friends advised him, especially as the night was very dark, to remain in Mt. Brydges till morning. His friends procured a room and refreshments; then left him to his much-needed rest. But for Ross there was no rest. Meanwhile, at the farm,

they were anxiously watching beside the sick bed. For a few hours after the doctors left Mrs. Ross rested quietly, and then a change, but not for the better, came. Alarmed, a messenger was dispatched in haste for Mr. Ross. It was midnight when he reached Strathroy, and, calling for Mr. Ross's nephew, William Geddes, who often accompanied his uncle to meetings and so knew the roads well, to come with him. Ross had only been resting a short time when a rap came to his door. Full well he knew what it meant. In a few minutes he was on the road. When Strathroy was reached business was beginning to move. Ross did not wait to go home, but made all speed to get to the farm. He had not gone far when he saw his brother's democrat turn into the road leading to town. His heart gave a throb. He pulled his horse to the side of the road to wait. Mr. Ross could not speak. Very gently they broke the sad news to him—Mrs. Ross had passed away at the dawn of the day. On this Gethsemane of sorrow let the veil be drawn. Two days later the body of the dear little mother was laid to rest in Nairn Cemetery.

Service over, with a wrench Mr. Ross turned round to leave, when a hand was laid on his shoulder. It was that of an old school-mate who had come to tell him that he had been elected and with a good majority. The news coming to him just then was like the sound of chimes ringing in a great distance. Before he could recover himself to respond to his school-mate, a man of middle age came up, and,

grasping his hand, shook it heartily. "I wanted, George," he said, "to be the first to congratulate you on having won this, your first election, and that under very, very, trying circumstances. I am proud to see one of my first pupils elected to fill so honorable a position. Stepping up, round by round, from the little log schoolhouse to the Parliament of Canada." These remarks brought Ross back to himself, and he replied: "I am very pleased, Mr. McTaggart, to have you with me to-day. It's mete that you should be the first to share with me in my success. From you I got my first school lessons and I owe you much for your patience as my teacher in trying to inspire me with high ideals and a desire to study." And then, turning to his school-mate, he said, "It's just like you, David. You always stood by me on the playground, and to-day you have taken the trouble to bring me the latest report. Thank you. Thank you both." They had scarcely finished speaking when the carriage drove up to take him home to Grandfather Campbell's. The children were too young to realize their loss. They were watching for Daddy, and ran shouting in their glee to meet him. What would the world be without the children? "Yes," he said to his sister, "I have the mother to live for in our children."

Ross did not feel equal to addressing the electors that evening. Together the family consulted regarding what was best to be done. They were not left long in doubt as to what the electors ex-

pected. He must put in an appearance. A cab drove up to the house to bring him to Strathroy. There crowds were awaiting him; also a torchlight procession met him to escort him to the hall. This he felt was more than he was able to bear; so he directed his driver to take another route that would lead him to his home and avoid meeting them. On every side they heard the hurrahs for Ross. The Liberals were jubilant. The town was lighted up with bonfires—a torchlight procession, rockets fired in the air and all the usual display for such an occasion. When he reached the town hall he was met with cheer after cheer, loud and long, but that over, the crowd showed themselves very considerate of him. It was with great difficulty Ross found voice wherewith to speak at all, but will power triumphed and in a very few words he thanked the electors for the honor conferred upon him as their representative in Parliament and for their good work and loyal support. He then pledged himself to work for their interests in every way possible. Several other speakers followed him. The first of these tendered to him the sincere sympathy of the electors and their appreciation of his coming to the meeting under such trying circumstances. As a mark of respect to Mrs. Ross, the meeting was short and the excited crowd quietly returned to their homes, the Liberals well pleased with their work.

Chapter X

SECOND PARLIAMENT OF CANADA

1873

IT WAS hard, very hard, for Mr. Ross to take up the broken threads. Had he not been sensitive to the call of duty, he might have failed at this critical time in his life. His four little children were fortunate to have the tenderest care of their mother's two sisters, who came to live with Mr. Ross.

Mr. Ross was anxious to be worthy of the confidence imposed in him by the electors. To be worthy of such he realized he must make a close study of politics—how the questions of the day should be handled by both sides of the House; the different standpoints from which they might be attacked; the precedents that guided and directed action, and so forth. His desire from the first was that he should meet his opponents on intellectual grounds. Indeed, this became one of his guiding principles throughout his whole political life. He began his political life with ideals, and his ideals rose with advancing years. The first winter of this new beginning soon passed, for what with study especially of politics and his

regular work of inspecting schools, he had little enough time to give to the dear little children, no time for one trying to "carry on" and no time to brood.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, OTTAWA.

1873.

The Dominion Parliament was opened with the usual formalities on March 6th, by Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General at that time. Speaking of this occasion, Ross said: "It was the first time that I had seen a live earl and it was not long till I was convinced that this earl was greater than his great pedigree." The Conservative Government had been returned to power with a majority of six. (At the election of 1867 the majority was 68). John A. Macdonald was still Premier. The first act on the part of the Liberal party was to select a leader. The choice was between Alexander Mackenzie and Edward Blake. The final decision was in favor of Mackenzie (before this and since Confederation the leadership was in the hands of a commission). Parliament was in session only three weeks when a "political bomb" was thrown into the camp. Sir John A. Macdonald was charged with receiving from Sir Hugh Allen, who was anxious to get control of the construction of the Canada Pacific Railway, money to be used for corrupting the electors. This charge was known

as the "Pacific Scandal," and was the means of the dissolution of the House and the defeat of the Government.

During the debate of six days Mr. Donald Smith (afterwards Lord Strathcona) had remained silent. He was a strong supporter of the Government and his silence was, Ross said, interpreted as loyalty to the Government. On the seventh day he rose, The atmosphere was tense, and after complimenting John A. Macdonald on his great service to Canada, he cautiously proceeded to say: "I would be willing to vote confidence in the Government if I conscientiously could." The bomb had burst. The Liberals, Ross said, thought that a Scottish conscience was a good thing to keep on hand.

On November the fifth the House adjourned and Mackenzie was sent for to consult with the Governor-General. In two months the House was dissolved and the members had again to appeal to the electors.

This was a great disappointment to Mr. Ross who, as he said, thought the political millennium had come.

"Should I run again for West Middlesex, or stick to my bailiwick as school Inspector?" he said. "Run, of course," said the Liberal convention; so out again he went for scalps. But there was no scalping to be done; he was elected by acclamation.

The following letter gives an insight into Mr. Ross's personal feeling at this time:

[Copy]

"House of Commons,
"Ottawa, April 15, 1873.

"My Dear Bro:

"I was very glad to get a letter from home, and particularly glad to know that my delivery from the 'Philistines' gave you so much pleasure. I felt quite sure that I would come out all right. I had the constant assurance of conscience that I had done nothing wrong, and although there may be a Providence, and no doubt there was, in permitting me to be to a certain extent annoyed, yet I felt satisfied that the result would neither bring defeat nor disgrace. I felt very thankful for the delivery nevertheless, and now I must say I feel more comfortable than I did at any time since my election. Those friends who play the part of the fox looking at the grapes they cannot reach may now compose themselves to possess their souls in patience. My good or bad fortune does not depend on their favors or their frowns, and although I might like to be the subject of their good wishes I am perfectly indifferent to their jealousy. My health is pretty good since spring opened out. I feel better. I get the opportunity to walk out a little. We are kept pretty busy either with committees or other matters, and my time for reading up is very limited; still, I do a good deal and believe that I am daily acquiring what will be useful to me in the future. I have not yet troubled the House much with debate. I believe it to be the best policy to acknowledge the prior claims of the older members. However, I have given three or four speeches. My speech on the Ballot has secured for me a good deal of credit. It was said to be one of the best made on the subject. I feel a good deal of diffidence in rising to speak among so many competitors. The

struggle here for pre-eminence is great, although apparently not so great as I expected. The opportunity of getting to the front is even better than I expected, the talent of the House—I mean the speaking talent—being confined to a very limited number. It might be that in a few years, when I am better posted on political matters and have mastered Parliamentary procedure that I will be able to take my share in debates, which I dare not venture yet. Already some of the new members have ventured too far and done their popularity irreparable injury. Prudence tells me to be careful.

"I like Parliamentary life very well. I feel quite at home now and enjoy the company of my fellows better as I become more acquainted with them. Sir John is yet strong enough to control the House. You will notice how adroitly he yields when opposition would be dangerous. This was quite apparent on Dual Representation and the Ballot Bill. It is quite certain, if something unusual does not turn up, that he will survive the Session. He is really a man of great talent. It is only here that I have come to the conclusion that he is a man of extraordinary tact and finesse. He keeps his friends in perfect harmony and defies his enemies. He can cajole or threaten or dodge or retreat according to the emergencies of the situation, but he always does it skilfully and to the satisfaction of his friends.

"I will, as usual, send you anything that comes to hand that I think might be of service to you. I will be glad to have a letter from you two or three times yet before the session closes, which will not be before the middle of May. Give my love to Mother, to Dorothy and all the friends.

"Yours affectionately,
"Geo. W. Ross."

"A. J. Ross, Esq.,
Nairn, Ont."

Sir George W. Ross received great inspiration and practical assistance from his brother Andrew. In his early years Andrew had decided to enter one of the professions, but owing to his father's health had to take the burden of the farm. Andrew Ross died at the age of 93, on May 16, 1921. The following is an extract from his obituary:

"He was an omnivorous reader. It was his boast late in life that there never had been a harvest day so busy that it could deprive him of at least two hours of the twenty-four with his books. He was a pillar in the Presbyterian Church, a life member of the Bible Society, and for thirty years its president. His companionship was sought by the thinking people of his neighborhood, and his neighborhood was far flung. The minister, the teacher, the inspector, the doctor and the editor were his admiring friends. The keenest theologians found in him a kindly, highly trained and tolerant foeman worthy of their steels. He kept abreast of the times in all Church and theological literature. He knew his Bible well, and he brought to bear upon it a keenness of intellect, a breadth of reading, a tolerance and reverence that was the astonishment and pleasure of many a learned divine. He knew his Watson and the older divines, and he was no stranger to the thoughts and teachings of Davidson and McFadyen. Not a minister for fifty years ever drew him into a conversation in his little den, who would not go back, and who did not look to going back with expectant pleasure. He was a poor theologian who spent an hour with Andrew Ross and did not pick up some inspiration and some added power of interpretation and exposition. He knew his Shakespeare and read it with a growing vision. He lived through it all. He held in his garden of imagery his Orlando and his Bassanio, his Celia and his Rosalind; he

learned them and loved them in his youth when his soul was attuned to their loves and passions, and he could upon command parade the whole gallery of the poet's purely fictional characters for the delight of his visitor. He read the historical plays critically. He was not satisfied to take his history from Shakespeare. He delved, examined and compared, and would tell you where the great playwright had sacrificed historical truth and date for the purpose of developing a character or painting a picture that would fit in with the conception of historical truth which the poet desired to present, rather than with the known facts of history. His exposition of the poet's philosophy underlying Hamlet and Lear was delightful. Whittier and Whitman were his friends. His conversation often brought to mind Macaulay's inquiry. "Why talk to the coachman when one might talk with Shakespeare or Milton?' His intellect was of such strength and keenness that he was enabled to the last to read what many persons consider difficult reading with ease and pleasure to himself. Browning and Ruskin were open books to him—not difficult, but illuminating. He knew his Carlyle thoroughly. In some ways he was not unlike the Sage of Chelsea. The great English authors were a mine in which he loved to delve for new beatuies, new thoughts and new inspirations. It was his pleasure to take down some book from its shelf and point to a passage in which he had seen some new beauty. Then in choice, chaste and illuminating English, he would spread before his visitor a new vision of the passage. He was familiar with every phase of Canadian politics. He had lived through most of it. What is history to most living Canadians was experience to him. He carried in his memory the names of the sponsors for not only adopted policies, but of proposed policies that never reached the statute book. The arguments of the champions of the many proposals were at his finger ends. He had definitely made up his

mind as to the wisdom or unwisdom of each proposal and would defend his position with a force, skill and adroitness of argument that would do credit to a trained parliamentarian. His memory for dates, names and places was marvellous. His brother, Sir George Ross, the late Premier, was wont to say, 'Oh, if I only had Andrew's memory.' It is an open secret among those who knew them well, that Andrew Ross' judgment and advice were sought and relied upon by the Prime Minister on many an occasion. He was always a staunch Liberal in politics, but his judgment was too sound and his intellect too penetrating to permit him to conclude that all the good was on either side of politics.

"Through his young manhood and his middle age he took his part in the tasks of the community with the utmost modesty. While it was known to all those who appreciated him that his knowledge, information, wisdom and integrity were of a very superior character, he neither paraded these matters nor did he allow others in his presence to discuss them or even refer to them. He was at the very last analyzing the work of the League of Nations and speculating upon its efficacy to preserve the world's peace. He was anxious to live long enough to see the reconstruction period of the war over. In his own little den he was attacking the problems with an energy and seriousness that amazed even those who knew him best. His work is done. The great regret is that he did not put much of the results of his labor in a permanent form."

Chapter XI

THIRD PARLIAMENT OF CANADA

1874

THE HOUSE was opened with the usual formalities. Sir John A. Macdonald had changed places with Alexander Mackenzie, and was sitting on the opposite side of the House, not, however, among the members, but in the chief seat as their leader. He had been chosen leader the very next day after his defeat. His party had the utmost confidence in his ability to bring them back to power within five years.

Ross had not been many days in the House before he learned, as he said, that "free lances are not required there, and that, one of the first duties of a supporter of the Government is to preserve a discreet silence on all public questions till after some responsible member of the Government has spoken. I might have opinions that were all right and quite harmless, whether right or wrong, so long as I did not turn them loose on the House." Then, too, Ross saw the wisdom of this unwritten law, and, discovering it, he was relieved of certain responsibilities he had laid upon himself. Feeling thus free, he took the opportunity of studying the attitude of the parties to each other and the different styles of parliamentary debate. He also made a careful study of the details of committee work.

With reference to public speaking Ross said, "How to express your thoughts with clearness requires practice. Sentences, in spite of your best efforts, may become entangled in each other, and some sentences will not crystalize at all. Your intended points are pointless; the barbed arrow falls short of the mark. What misery! The applause that you anticipated is stillborn, and you are about resolving that if you survive this effort you will never venture on another. It is only through great tribulation that you can be enrolled among the first-class speakers."

The Mackenzie Government had many very difficult problems to face. Conspicuous among these was the construction of the Canada Pacific Railway, the Riel Rebellion question, and the economic depression. To remedy the latter Sir John A. Macdonald launched his famous scheme—"The National Policy," 1876. By a high protective tariff he promised great prosperity. His slogan was "Canada for the Canadians." Through the promises of the National Policy the Government was defeated, 1878. Ross escaped "shipwreck," how, he said, he scarcely knew, but his friends said: "Ross has our confidence." "Mackenzie," said Ross, "felt his defeat very keenly, and no leader ever fell for whom his friends had greater sympathy."

Speaking of the defeat of the Government, Ross said: "Honesty and efficiency in politics and indeed in any public position will not always of

themselves gain public confidence." Speaking about Macdonald's tactics, Ross said: "There is a charm about courage, even if it sometimes borders upon recklessness. The very big way in which Sir John launched his policy from the first was an omen of success."

In 1875 Mr. Ross married Miss Catharine Boston, a sister of his old friend and Temperance associate, Robert Boston. Miss Boston was one of his pupils when he taught in the red schoolhouse at Lobo. Mr. Ross delighted to remind his wife that it was his teaching that made her always "measure up," and truly Kate Boston was a capable woman, and in every way adapted to fill the position of wife of a public man. From girlhood she took an interest in politics, having heard many discussions in her own home. She was capable of forming opinions of her own and could weigh one party against another with a fairness possessed by few. She was a brilliant conversationalist. Her public approach was good, and she shared in a very real way some of the political strain, by interviewing, in Mr. Ross's place, many of those who came to the home seeking advice or information. Her cheerful disposition did much to tide her husband over crucial times, when suffering with rheumatism. She was a woman who made the common things of every day great.

Chapter XII

FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF CANADA

1878

AGAIN the political parties changed sides and John A. Macdonald is Premier. Mackenzie and his supporters are now to be found to the left of the Speaker, Ross is among them. Mackenzie, now leader of the Opposition, was as resolute and keen as ever. His speaking face plainly said, "They also serve who only stand and wait."

Early in the session (but after the Finance Minister introduced the resolutions which precede a bill for fixing the tariff on dutiable goods) Mr. Mackenzie submitted a resolution stating the attitude of the Opposition in regard to the National Policy. A debate of a month followed, but the National Policy became Statue Law, May 15, 1879, three years after Sir John moved his first resolution in its favor.

In 1880 the Government entered into an agreement with George Stephens, of Montreal, for the construction of the Canada Pacific Railway. Construction of the road had begun under the Mackenzie Government, and the new Government carried it on pending a company to take it over. The Government had given the company wonderful

concessions. The debate on this bill continued for over a month. On this occasion Mr. Ross made a speech of four and three-quarter hours—the longest speech he ever made. After the census of 1881 was taken it was found that Ontario was entitled to four additional representatives. This gave the Government a chance to change the boundaries of the electoral districts and a bill known as the Gerrymander Bill was introduced to the House. The object of the bill evidently was to get an opportunity to so change the boundaries of certain constituencies as to get political advantage for the Conservative party. In opposition, Ross presented an alternative bill. This was ignored, and the Government bill passed.

The following episode, Ross said, was related to him by his opponent, A. P. McDonald. A. P. McDonald waited upon John A. Macdonald to make sure that the changes in the boundary of West Middlesex were such as to assure his election. "You may," said John A., "put this township in West Middlesex or you may take that one off, but that little devil Ross will beat you in spite of what you do." Sir John A. Macdonald proved to be a good prophet. Ross was returned at the election of 1882 by a majority of forty-eight votes. The Government was sustained.

Chapter XIII

FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF CANADA

1883

ALL THE Liberals could do by canvass, speeches, and so forth, to turn the tide of public opinion against the framers of the National Policy, the C.P.R. Bill and the Gerrymander Bill, was of no avail. John A. Macdonald still held the confidence of the people, expressed by his majority in every province except Manitoba.

As there were no questions of great importance requiring immediate attention, the doings in the House were comparatively quiet. The Opposition had thus an opportunity to give special attention to criticizing the Estimates and the legislation as proposed by the Government. By way of provoking thought and showing the Government that the Liberals had some initiative, Ross, with the approval of Mr. Blake, reopened the question of Reciprocity with the United States, asking for correspondence betwen Canada and the United States bearing upon the subject.

"I spoke for three-quarters of an hour," said Ross, "and was listened to with fair attention. Though not particularly impressed with my effort to instruct the House, I ventured to say to Mr. Blake a few hours afterwards, 'Well, I have done

my best for Reciprocity. How did you like my speech?' 'My dear boy,' he said, 'I slept the whole time you were speaking.' Whether I was to take his response as a mark of perfect confidence in my ability to do justice to the subject, or as showing lack of interest in anything I might say, was my dilemma. It was, however, the last speech on which I asked his opinion, either before or after delivery."

The only question of any great significance in the Session of 1883 was a bill to take control of the liquor traffic away from the Provincial Legislatures and place it under the Dominion Government. In a speech delivered at Yorkville shortly before the election, 1882, Sir John had declared that he "would teach that little tyrant, Mowat, a few lessons in Constitutional Law, which it was well for him to know." Sir John seemed to think that the Mowat Government owed its strength to the support of men engaged in the liquor traffic. The Liberals opposed this Bill as unconstitutional. Though the bill passed in the House, it was referred to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and defeated. This bill was at the root of the Temperance legislation as faced by Mr. Ross after he became Premier.

The Protested Election of 1882.

Ross's election of 1882 was protested. Speaking of this Ross said—"What could be more annoying? I had fought the severest battle of my life. A

Gerrymandered Constituency and a hostile Government to be overcome. It took me weeks to accomplish the task, and now I have to be dragged into court to answer for every irregularity that might have occurred, with or without my knowledge, during the campaign. But such were Her Majesty's orders, and I had no choice—I appeared. Did not one J. M. Harper, of the village of Wardsville, corruptly pay one Joseph Sewell, a blacksmith, the sum of one dollar and fifty cents for the time spent by the said Sewell in going to the polls to vote for the respondent? To all this the said Harper swore on the Holy Bible as being 'the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.' The Courts declared that the said Harper had broken the law, and that as he was acting on my behalf, though without my knowledge or consent. My seat was declared vacant and I was no longer a member of Parliament. How true what Cowper says: 'An earthquake may be made to spare the man that's strangled by a hair.'"

"By the avenging angel, under a similar process of law," said Ross, "the seat for the Legislative Assembly was also opened, and Sir Oliver asked me to be his Minister of Education and take the vacant seat. I took it, and that is how I became a Minister of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario."

Chapter XIV

THE ONTARIO LEGISLATURE

1883-1899

MR. ROSS was the second Minister of Education. His predecessor was Hon. Adam Crooks. For nearly forty years prior to the time of Adam Crooks (1844-1876) education had been administered through a Council of Public Instruction, with Rev. Dr. Ryerson as Chief Superintendent of Education. On the retirement of Dr. Ryerson, 1876, and partly on his recommendation, a Department of Education was organized, consisting of the Executive Council (substituted for the Council of Public Instruction); and the functions of the Chief Superintendent of Education was vested in a Minister of Education. The Minister of Education was by this step made directly responsible to Parliament and the electors of the Province. Henceforth all the proceedings of the Department became subject to the approval of the House. If any step taken by the Minister did not appear to be in the interests of the public, it might be challenged or discussed and the Minister of Education called upon to defend what he did or what he omitted to do in regard to school matters. On the other hand, as Ross put it, "The Superintendent discharged his duties to the best of his

judgment and was condemned or vindicated on the merits of his administration. He had no political connection."

Dr. Ryerson had set precedents worthy of imitation. He is well named "The Founder of our School System." Mr. Mowat had made the change, as noted, in order that Dr. Ryerson's successors could build more worthy structures than they could otherwise have done on the strong foundation he had laid. For these two reasons alone Mr. Ross was most anxious to "measure up." He had another, and perhaps an even more worthy reason—a vision of the importance of the education of the youth of the Province for future citizenship and his responsibility for such as Minister of Education.

"How do you like your field, Mr. Ross?" remarked lawyer John Cameron, on one of Mr. Ross's return trips shortly after he had established himself in his office at the Education Department, St. James Square, Toronto. "I'm so much in my element, John, that I'm frightened." "Thought you were too good a fighter to be frightened at the shadows of Crooks and Ryerson!" "Haven't seen their shadows, John; have only seen the fine structures left unfinished and on which I must build. Have already begun to give out the contracts." "I wouldn't waste any time, Ross." Cameron replied, smiling. "Action! Action! Action!" again was one of Ross's mottoes, and Mr. Cameron, in whose office Ross worked at law, knew it. (An incident related to the writer.)

In the youth of the country centred the hope of the nation, its wealth, its power, and its security; and the kind of youth produced depended to a great extent on its educational standards. So stated Mr. Ross shortly after his appointment. Mr. Ross had been a teacher for ten years and School Inspector for twelve years (nine of which he was Model School Inspector). He was also member of the Control Committee of Examiners from 1876 to 1880. Ross had taken an active part in connection with the establishment of County Model Schools, and he drafted, in connection with the late J. M. Buchan, their regulations (for which provision had been made by the late Hon. Adam Crooks in 1876), and he subsequently prepared a syllabus of lectures for their direction. These experiences gave him a great regard for teachers. They were first and always in his mind. The teachers to Ross were the real nation builders —the real makers of Canada, for had they not to do with the formation of character?

Quotation from address delivered in Presbyterian Church, Strathroy: "The prosperity of a country depends, not on its great wealth, nor on its national defences, but on the character of its people, which in turn depends on the standards of education set by parents and teachers, as also on their co-operation for the mutual benefit of the child." The training of the teacher was with Ross paramount, and "what do the teachers want?" was a question always on his lips.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Ross took great pleasure in frequently entertaining groups of students and teachers. On such occasions Mr. Ross made it a point to have a few minutes' quiet, unobtrusive chat with every one present. In this way he often got valuable information—information that sometimes helped him to solve problems simmering in his mind seeking solution. Ross looked for the best in everyone and he found it. Occasions as noted were twice blessed.

That the state should provide for the child the best possible means for its development, and at every period during its school life, was the stand taken from the very first by Mr. Ross. In order to do this kindergartens (and a training school for kindergarten teachers) were established. Through this new and forward step the children of the Province were given the privilege of beginning their school life in the joyous freedom of the home atmosphere, and amid birds and flowers and other living things so necessary to the development of the best in the child. In order that young men and young women should complete their school training in as favourable an environment, Ross succeeded in launching a scheme, the uniting several of the different colleges of Toronto in a federation. Wherever there was a weak link between the kindergarten and the university, effort was made to strengthen it or to substitute a new one in its place.

In 1885 Hon. Mr. Ross took a long step forward in educational affairs in this Province, when he

introduced a bill providing for the consolidation of the acts relating to public schools, high schools, separate schools and mechanics' institutes. The federation of the University and University College and the affiliation ofthe denominational colleges with the University was the next great step.

University Federation

In trying to bring about this federation Sir George Ross was confronted with several difficult problems In the first place, said Mr. Ross, it would appear that the country did not appreciate the value of the University, either intrinsically or as a factor in the general system of education. The University was said to be the rich man's school. If its endowments were not sufficient, let those who benefited by it make up the difference. Besides the University of Toronto, originally known as King's College (the charter of which had been given as far back as 1827, and work started 1844), a number of colleges in the interests of the different denominations had been founded. These colleges were supported by the denominations they represented, and were often in great need of funds to carry on their work. They had power to grant degrees. The Government, however, recognizing the value of the general educational service rendered, gave them small grants. These grants were withdrawn by the Sanfield Macdonald government. While the colleges, after a certain time, did not expect the renewal of the grants with-

drawn, they were not prepared that any additional aid should be given to the University of Toronto. Members of denominations, said Ross, who had seats in the Legislature shared the views of the college authorities. Under such conditions a direct grant to the University was impossible.

The second problem, said Ross, that confronted him was, how to bring the colleges into such relationship with the university that aid to one was practically aid to all. Accordingly, a conference, at which all the universities of Ontario were represented, was called. "The attitude of the confreres of the different Universities towards the federal union varied with their traditions and financial needs." Queen's University and Trinity University thought that closer relationship with the Provincial University would weaken their hold upon their respective denominations and their religious influence over the young members who looked forward to a professional career. Then, too, they feared the loss of prestige, which would redound to the State University, if they surrendered the power they possessed of conferring degrees in arts.

The attitude of Sir Daniel Wilson, President of Toronto University, was unsympathetic towards Federal Union. He feared that the increased representation of the colleges on the Senate of the University, to which they would be entitled, might injuriously affect the non-sectarian character of the university education and destroy, or at least

impair, its character as a State University. The Government decidedly refused to consider any form of federation which would involve direct financial aid to denominational education, as the Legislative Assembly was on record against all aid of this kind.

Dr. Nelles, Chancellor of Victoria University, came to the conclusion that federation was impracticable, and withdrew early from the conference. His place was taken by Dr. Burwash, who set himself to work to find a solution of the problems involved in federation. He proposed a scheme for this purpose which was practically accepted. This scheme was to subdivide the arts course into two sections, retaining for all federating colleges certain subjects which would form a substantial part of an arts curriculum, and leaving the remaining subjects to a staff of professors and instructors under the control of the State, to be known as the University of Toronto. The course of study assigned to the University was to be open to all colleges free of charge, and maintained by the Province, while the denominational colleges would maintain their portion of the arts course at their own expense. The denominational colleges, under this method, were under no restraint as to the instruction in theology or any other subject considered important in the religious education of their students, while Toronto University preserved its non-sectarian character and provided instruction in the sciences for all federating colleges free of

charge. Then, by this method, federating colleges were enabled to share in the endowment of the University, at the same time maintaining their strictly denominational character. Then, by surrendering their rights of conferring degrees in arts, their graduates would have the prestige which pertains to a university recognized by the State and whose educational standing was universally acknowledged.

In 1885 the Government, to show its approval of the federation scheme, submitted to the Legislative Assembly a bill embodying the decision of the Conference, leaving it with the denominational colleges to accept or reject its terms.

Victoria University, in 1887, accepted the terms of the Government Bill and placed itself in direct relation with the University of Toronto. In 1904 Trinity University did likewise. Queen's University approved of the scheme, but public opinion in Kingston was strong against its removal to Toronto; so it was decided to maintain Queen's University on its old foundation. Nor could McMaster University see its way clear to enter the federation.

The effects of the Federation Act upon the University of Toronto and the federating colleges have been most beneficial. Higher education, due partly to this scheme, has made remarkable progress. In 1883 the teaching staff of the University consisted of twenty-one, and undergraduates, 320. In 1903-1904 the teaching staff was

increased to 120, and undergraduated to 1,209. In 1903-1904 students in attendance at Toronto University and affiliated and federated colleges numbered 4,825.

The following colleges were affiliated with Toronto University:—Ontario Agricultural College, St. Michael's College, Trinity and Toronto Medical School, Toronto Conservatory of Music, the School of Pharmacy and a number of other educational institutions.

Hon. Mr. Ross also co-operated with University trustees in the erection of many new buildings.

During Mr. Ross's regime twenty-six new features were introduced into the public schools, six into the separate schools, nine into the high schools, twelve into the normal schools, five into the School of Practical Science, and ten into the University of Toronto—sixty-eight in all. Each of these features required the most careful consideration. Details had to be worked out and in many cases they involved the expenditure of large sums of money. Space will not allow giving these features in full. The following are some of the most important:

Provided for instruction in household science and manual training in public schools.

Authorized a new series of text-books in every subject in the public schools.

Reduced the number of text-books from sixty-five (number authorized in 1883) to eleven in 1898—one for each subject.

Canadianized the text-books by securing their preparation, with few exceptions, by Canadian authors.

Introduced compulsory teaching of hygiene and temperance.

Made the study of Canadian History compulsory.

Required that teachers open and close schools with scripture reading and prayer.

Established Continuation classes.

Appointed inspectors for New Ontario.

Originated idea of Empire Day. Tried it in public schools as early as 1893. Followed in England, 1899.

Contended steadily for the uniformity of text-books.

Established technical schools in Toronto, Hamilton, Stratford and Kitchener.

(Much of the success of the new system of training teachers could be attributed to the instruction he gave to the principals of model schools and to the board of trustees.)

Directed and prepared a new series of readers for separate schools.

Better distribution of Government grants to schools.

Placed examinations in the hands of teachers, which were formerly conducted by clergy men, doctors, lawyers.

(By the end of his regime every book used in the schools of Ontario was manufactured in Canada. In 1883, when he took office eighty-seven had to

be imported. When he became Minister, out of 184 authorized books only forty-nine were written by Canadians, the rest being either British or United States authors. When he laid down his office *every one* of the books used, except the High School Euclid and the Beginners' Greek Book—neither very good material for even the most patriotic minister to use to infuse national sentiment—was the work of a Canadian author, in many cases a teacher who drew royalties from the work. This was accomplished together with a steady reduction in price. The Ontario text-books became so popular as to be adopted in many cases in the Western Provinces, thus spreading the spirit of nationality in the newer parts of Canada.)

Improved equipment of high schools.

Established science courses in physics and botany in high schools.

Established commercial course in high schools.

Improvements made for the training of teachers, including establishment of the School of Pedagogy,

Erected and opened an additional normal school at London, which cost $100,798.

Extended term at normal school from four to six months (afterwards extended by Mr. Harcourt to one year).

Enlarged buildings of School of Science, Toronto, and added to the equipment—cost, $650.000

Established Mining School at Kingston.

Extended the Provincial System of free libraries, changing the old mechanics' institutes, in 1895, into public libraries under municipal management.

Enlarged the staff of Provincial University in all its departments.

Admission of women to the University.

Increased endowment of University of Toronto, by transfer of Upper Canada College site and by appropriation of Crown lands.

Enlargement of School of Practical Science, and established the Faculty of Medicine in Toronto University.

"In no period in the history of the Province was a greater impulse given to the work of education, in all its departments, as during the period Mr. Ross was Minister of Education."—*Toronto Globe.*

The following verdict was given by the jurors at the World's Fair, held in Chicago, 1893: "A system of public instruction almost ideal in the perfection of its details and the unity which binds together in one great whole all the schools, from the kindergarten to the University."

Mr. Ross's experience in working out the principle of development of the school question as an organic whole in the interests of national advancement, is especially interesting. One of the first serious difficulties he encountered was that in connection with the French schools of Eastern Ontario. "One would imagine," says the *Toronto Globe* (March 9, 1914), "that it was in the year 1912 that these words were written, but they were

written in 1898." It was asserted that the Eastern end of the Province was gradually falling into the hands of the French Canadian settlers whose children were not taught the English language and received a scant measure of education of the sort to fit them for after years. Careful enquiry was made and improvements adopted under which every school child in Ontario whose mother tongue is French is taught English; also, in connection with this, Mr. Ross fought down the proposal that the use of the French language in the schools of Prescott, Russell and Essex should be entirely forbidden, even although it was the mother tongue, and was recognized as an aid to the study of English.

Minister of Education.—To this important office Mr. Ross brought a strong, clear and well-stored mind, wide experience in teaching, hearty enthusiasm in educational matters, and sterling qualities as a departmental administrator and public officer. He strikes the interviewer at once by his clear-headed practical view of things, and gives the impression of an eminently safe man, a cautious, but vigorous, administrator, with no fads or crotchets, but with abounding energy, unflagging purpose and strong common sense.—*Canadian Biographical Dictionary, 1880.*

Contribution to Education.

"No one," said Senator J. K. Kerr, "has done so much as Sir George to promote the cause of Education in Ontario. He had been honored by

his sovereign with a knighthood, and had occupied many distinguished posts in public and business life. He had been a voluminous and able writer. His oratory was of a high order, his logic being sound and his eloquence captivating. It has been well said that he was 'A monarch of oratory.' Beloved by his associates he was known for capacity, both at home and abroad. His career was a record of usefulness to his country, and in his death he had bequeathed to Canada the memory of a life of the truest loyalty to the Empire."—*Senator J. K. Kerr.*

Tribute of Senator Belcourt (*The Globe*): "To the broad, liberal spirit of Sir George Ross, to his love of fair play and justice, and to the respect of the Constitution of his country, the Catholic minority in Ontario owes the preservation of its schools and the preservation of the right of having taught to their own children in their own schools the tenets of their own ancestral faith."

At the head of the Department of Education for sixteen years, Mr. Ross gave what many will regard as his life work to his native Province. Certainly the system of education developed *enormously* under his administration, so that, while the outlines of the structure raised by Dr. Ryerson could still be discovered, the *changes, growing gradually* with the needs of the day, were so far-reaching as to constitute almost complete re-construction.

Mr. Ross, thoroughly familiar with the work of the schools and with educational problems, brought professional knowledge to bear on the operations of his department, in *their entirety*, *improving the machinery*, and bringing into harmony *diverse* interests and warring influence.—*History of Ontario, by Alex. Fraser, F.G.S.C.*

A political issue raised by the opposition, and indeed one which provoked religious animosity, was the authorization by the Department of Education of a book of Scriptural Selections, to be read in schools. These selections were in the first place made by W. H. C. Kerr, a barrister in Brantford who undertook the work of his own accord, simply because he was interested in religious education. They were designed for use in public schools, but he did not know he could get them adopted.

In October, 1882, a Committee appointed by the joint action of the Anglican and Presbyterian Synods and the Methodist Conference waited on Mr. Mowat and Mr. Ross, and presented resolutions passed by these Church Courts recommending a more general and regular reading of Scriptures in public schools. Mr. Kerr now felt the time was opportune to have the selections made by him considered. A draft of his selections was accordingly submitted to the Minister of Education and to the Premier. Both approved of the selections made. Copies of these selections were then printed and sent by the Minister of Education to a com-

mittee of forty clergymen and laymen appointed by the Anglican, Baptist, Congregational, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, respectively. This large committee referred the work of revision to a sub-committee. This committee, after acknowledging the courtesy and interest of the Minister of Education, reported that they "Confidently recommended to the Church the volume now authorized as a great onward step in religious education, as a gratifying proof of unity of action which has been shown to be possible in this matter." These selections had been submitted also to Archbishop Lynch, who made one single suggestion, viz., "who" for "which" in the Lord's Prayer.

In a letter to the *Mail*, June 16, 1886, Archbishop Lynch said: "With respect to the book of Bible extracts issued by the Minister of Education, we did not think of it, much less suggest it."

The question was asked Mr. Ross: "Why submit the selections to Archbishop Lynch at all?" "The answer to that is easy." Ross replied; "the public schools of Ontario are mixed schools, attended by 50,000 Roman Catholic children. To make the reading of Scripture obligatory is a great change in the regulations. Is there anything unreasonable, then, that their representative should be consulted when representatives of other denominations were consulted?"

A pamphlet, issued for campaign purposes (especially to defeat Mr. Ross), election of 1886, con-

tained the following statement: "No well-informed person now doubts that the compilation, or rather the mutilation, of the Scriptures was the result of a compact made between the Mowat-Fraser Government and the Romish Hierarchy of this Province." In order to reflect on Mr. Ross's good name, the selections were named "The Ross Bible." A good political slogan; for a man who would dare presume to attempt to make "A Bible," was surely not worthy the confidence of the electorate nor a fit and proper person to be entrusted with the Educational interests of the Province.

This was one of the times in which it would seem as if the interests of the people could have been better served had the Minister of Education been free from political responsibility. Mr. Ross, however, was notwithstanding elected in 1886, 1890, 1894, and 1898, during all of which period he held the portfolio of Minister of Education.

But besides Mr. Ross's special duties as Minister of Education, many other duties incumbent upon him as member of the Legislature and of the Cabinet, claimed his time and ability. Mr. Ross was always to be found in his seat during the Session. He felt himself equally responsible with his leader, Sir Oliver Mowat, whom he admired greatly and to whom he was always most loyal for the interpretation of the Constitution, the foundation of which Mr. Mowat had so wisely helped to lay. "It is by the interpretation of a Constitution that its length and its breadth and its height and

its depths are fully measured," stated Mr. Ross in a tribute to Mr. Mowat after his death, and many examples of this came before Mr. Ross in actual work with Mr. Mowat and the other members of the Cabinet.

The Provincial Boundaries question; Provincial rights as to rivers and streams and railways; the Manitoba school question; the power of the Legislature in regard to prohibition. From the very inception of Federation Mr. Mowat contended that the Provinces stood in the same relation to the Crown as the Dominion Parliament. This led to contests of many kind, and ultimately to the recognition by the Privy Council Judicial Committee of the complete sovereignty of the Legislature within its constitutional limitations.

To keep in intelligent touch, not to speak of mastering, such questions, and questions of such paramount importance to the Province and to the country, required great courage and indefatigable work, and Ross mastered them not simply to decide the pros and cons of them, but mastered them in relation to the educational interests of the growing citizens of the Province. Mr. Ross was always building, not only for present needs, but for the greater Canada to be.

To know the real man—George W. Ross—and the secret of that subtle something that always called forth the best in those he met, one would have to see him in his home. The following sketch was given me by a niece who was a frequent guest at the Ross's:

The day in the Ross home always began (irrespective of weather or public strain) like a beautiful spring morning—full of sunshine. Sharp at 7.30 a.m. the rising bell rang. It had seldom finished ringing before the father could be heard calling in the hall "Good morning," in his cheery voice. Sometimes the little children enjoyed a few minutes frolic with father in the hall. The breakfast bell rang sharp at 8 a.m., so there was no time to be lost, and every child was expected to be at the table and ready for school, which opened at 9.30. Breakfast over, "The Book" was reverently read and thanks for the night's care offered to the Giver of all Good, and with earnest pleadings for wisdom and guidance for himself and family and all those near and dear to him. All were committed to Him whom he "Would trust, though he could not trace," incidentally a phrase he never failed to use when some perplexing problem was seeking solution in the Cabinet. As the children grew older they could sense the public pulse by the morning petition. Dinner was served sharp at 6 p.m. It was a real family banquet, and all the children had to be prompt on time and at their best. The mother and father were real hostesses to their large family of eight. Every child was individually considered, and whatever they had to say was respected and appreciated, with rare exceptions. The conversation took many turns, but was always elevating and bright.

Then came the family hour in the living-room. A social chat round the grate-fire, or a game of cards, or a little music filled the time. At 8 p.m., or shortly afterwards, the father retired to his library or to meet engagements at public or church meetings, committee meetings or social functions. The older children retired to the study and the younger children to mother's room. After the younger children went to bed Mrs. Ross would generally sit beside her husband with a bit of light sewing. "I never spoke a word," she would laughingly remark. At 9 p.m. the informal cup of tea was served, and then work resumed till it was time to retire. Mr. Ross would sometimes go downstairs after all the family had gone to bed, shut all the doors and rehearse parts, indeed sometimes the whole, of a public speech he had in the making.

"Father's home," were words freighted with beautiful meaning to the Ross family. On his arrival (if he had been away for even a few days) the word was quickly passed from one child to the other, if they could be reached at all, and the group of eight would often meet him in the hall, even before he had time to remove his overcoat. Sunday was a special home day. One of Mr. Ross's great pleasures was attending the morning service with his family at the church of his old friend, Rev. Dr. Milligan (where he was an elder and a manager). To walk to church with father, if the mother was not going, was the great joy of the

children. They then got a real good chance to tell him their secret plans or their little troubles, and he always understood. After church the family had a sing-song. Ross loved the simple hymns, especially those "We used to sing in Strathroy at Sunday school." (Mr. Ross was superintendent of the Strathroy Sunday school for many years.) If a friend accompanied them home from church, as was frequently the case, they were invited to join in the singing with the family. Then came the informal cup of tea.

Betimes, when the children were little, Mr. Ross would remain home from church in the evening and have a children's hour. It was a delightful hour. The children sang their pretty kindergarten hymns and songs, recited selections of poetry learned in school, or chatted merrily about one thing and another. The father was always ready to supplement with his story or recitation.

On all occasions, Mr. Ross tried to impress on his children the importance of being watchful. "It's the little foxes that spoil the vines," he would frequently remark.

"Father, will you please mail these letters," said one of his young daughters, as he was about to step into his coupé to drive to his office, handing him as she spoke a number of letters. Looking them over Ross replied, "You've forgotten to stamp them, dear." "There aren't any stamps left, father; but you've got a lot in the office. I saw a pile there yesterday, just on the table."

Straightening himself to his full height and smiling kindly, but shaking his head as if in disapproval he replied: "Those are Government stamps. I have no right to use those for private letters." With these words he drew a quarter out of his pocket and placed it lovingly in his little daughter's hand. "There, now run off and don't tempt your father any more to steal Government stamps."

Mr. Ross had a great love for the "little ones." "I'm going to visit the kindergarten for some fresh inspiration," he would frequently announce. "That place puts new life into a fellow." Mr. Ross was never too busy to spare time to see his friends. His numerous nieces and nephews were always made to feel they were "of the Clan." He had an encouraging word suited to each individual. The clan must be loyal and live up to its heritage, even in spending money, as the following story shows.

One Sunday after church Mr. Ross heard laughter and moving of chairs in the hall. Wishing to be a partner in the fun, he went to the door and said: "What have you lost, children. A diamond?" His niece, who was visiting the family, replied: "I dropped a precious ten-cent piece and I've offered half its value to the finder."

"I saw you put ten cents on the collection plate, Jessie."

"Oh, no, Uncle," replied the niece. "I had a five-cent piece and a ten-cent piece in my glove and I put the five-cent piece on the collection plate."

With laughter he said: "O Jessie! Jessie! You can't cheat the Lord. I venture to say the lost coin will never be found." And the lost coin never was found.

Mr. Ross appreciated greatly the tender care of his wife. "Mother, you're a real Pool of Siloam," he would often remark; or "Mother, to manage a household like ours requires as much brains as it does to be a good Cabinet Minister; yes, even more, and you're doing it, you're doing it."

The Ross home had been blessed with nine children: James (died in infancy); Jennie (Mrs. Cassius Belton, Ottawa); Ellen (Mrs. Austin Hutchinson, Toronto); Margaret (Mrs. Cameron Brown, deceased); Duncan Campbell (Judge Ross, St. Thomas); George William (Dr. Ross, Toronto); Catharine Boston (Mrs. Charles Mitchel, deceased); Florence (Mrs. Ernest Gunn, Toronto); Mabel (Mrs. Leslie Wilson, Toronto).

The following are characteristic letters from Mr. Ross to his family.

OTTAWA, Dec. 13, 1880.

"My Dear Jennie:

"I suppose you will know on looking at the date of this letter that it was written on your birthday. I have only time to write you a short letter. I think, as you have been a pretty good girl for fifteen years, you deserve, at least, a short letter, and had I only time enough I would like to make it very long.

"It may be possible that the thought sometimes passes through your mind that your papa has so much to do

that he does not want to think about you. If such a thought ever occurred to you, it is a mistake. I think of you very often, and often wonder what sort of a grown-up woman you are going to make. Are you going to be patient and sweet-tempered and affectionate and kind and good—a person people cannot help but love and esteem and one that will be kind to brothers and sisters and papa and mamma? My dear Jennie, although I have every confidence in you, as I feel you have been a very good girl, I wish to say that I am hoping you will always continue the same. My chief concern in life is for my wife and children. I want them to love each other and not to forget how sweet and happy life can be made by good actions, kind words and purity of heart.

"Write me when you can. Do not study too hard, and believe me

"Your affectionate,

PAPA."

3 ELMSLEY PLACE, TORONTO,
Sept. 19, 1906.

"My Dear Jean:

"Who told you that grandpa had a birthday? I thought only young people had birthdays. Well, I had a nice birthday after all. I got a chicken and a box of cigars from two old ladies in London. I got a necktie from an old man in Strathroy and lots of nice things from old girls at home. Besides, I got "Many Happy Returns" from a little pet that used to help me downstairs and fill my pipe for me. So you see I had quite a nice birthday, and hope I may have a few more. Aunt Nellie tells me you are as bright and happy as a bird. I hope you will soon get rid of your brace and high boot. As soon as this happens come down to see me and I will promise not to let Dr. Kenzie bother you.

"Give my love to Mamma and Papa and all the rompers that are good to you. Find a kiss for yourself all on this letter.

"Your affectionate
"GRANDPAPA."

"Miss Jean Belton,
"377 Wellington St., London."

3 ELMSLEY PLACE, TORONTO,
Sept. 18, 1912.

"My Dear Jennie:

"I am sorry I cannot be with you on your silver anniversary. It is only a short time, it seems to me, as I look back, and yet it is a big block in a lifetime. I congratulate you and Cassius on all the happiness of those twenty-five years, and particularly on the lovely children that surround you. God bless you all. May you see many, many years of health and happiness for yourselves and family. Hope your celebration will be one of great joy to all present. With much love,

"Affectionately,
FATHER."

"P.S.—Thanks for birthday congratulations. I'm very well—only 71—that is not old.

"FATHER."

Chapter XV

INCIDENTS—HONORS—TRIP ABROAD

1883 to 1886

IN 1883 Mr. Ross was rewarded in a marked way for his industry He graduated in law. (He had matriculated in 1879.) In 1888 he received the degree of L.L.D. from St. Andrew's University, Scotland. In 1887 he was called to the bar, but his public duties never permitted him to enter the actual practice of law as a profession.

In 1886 Mr. Ross served as Honorary Commissioner to the Indian Colonial Exhibition in London. He was acompanied by Mrs. Ross and his niece, Miss Nellie Geddes Mrs. Ross often referred to this trip as "Our honeymoon trip," which they had apart from the real pleasure of the trip. Mr. Ross said: "It was a very profitable trip, as it gave me the opportunity to gather considerable information which helped to strengthen very materially my work as Minister of Education." To get in touch with the Educational Institutions and some of the prominent educators of the Old Land, with whom he was so well acquainted through reading, had been Mr. Ross's dream from early manhood. Mr. Ross's work as commissioner claimed his full time in the morning. In the afternoon, accompanied by his wife and niece, he went sight-seeing. The British Parliament being in session at this time,

Mr. Ross had the pleasure and the privilege of attending several night sessions. He was inspired by the grace, dignity and refinement of the speakers.

After Mr. Ross had completed his work as commissioner, he and Mrs. Ross visited France, Germany, Ireland, and then Scotland, the land of his forbears. The Rosses were the guests, while in Scotland, of Bailie Wallace, of Tain, an old friend of Mr. Ross's father. The Bailie was ninety-two years old. While in Scotland they visited, with Bailie Wallace as guide, Mr. Ross's father's Scottish home (a picturesque old stone house overgrown with ivy and wild roses), the church where his forbears worshipped, and the old kirkyard, and Balnagown Castle, the ancestral home of the Ross Clan. They then called on Rev. William Cameron, brother of the Rev. Laughlin Cameron, with whom Mrs. Ross had spent her girlhood days. Next the home of Robbie Burns was visited. Mr. Ross's feelings were stirred and he exclaimed:

"Land of my sires! What mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band,
That knits me to the rugged strand?"

As Mr. Ross set foot on Canadian soil, after his arrival home, his feelings were again stirred, and he voiced them thus:

"Others may love the South Land,
And they may cross the sea;
But this land is our land,
And Canada for me."

No doubt it was his trip at this time that crystalized many of his ideas of Canadianism and Imperialism. the spirit of which may be seen from the following extracts:

THE DAY AND A' WHA HONOR 'T.

Speech on St. Andrew's Day, Nov. 30, 1909. Reply to toast proposed by Sir William Mortimer Clark.

Now, what should Canadians do, having regard to what Scotland has done? Scotchmen have preserved their individuality the world over (hear, hear) and they have preserved their institutions; and they have treasured up in their hearts all the sentiment and heroism of their own people. Should not Canadians have a similiar desire to create a Canadian individuality—to make it worth preserving? And while associating, as we must, with each other, and while engaging in business and enterprises with other nations, let it be known that there is a standard of honor, and that there is a standard of manliness to be called Canadian, which will be recognized as such the wide world over.

If Scotland in her few heather hills can produce the race that she has produced; if Scotland has given laws to the world in many respects, and directed the commerce and the legislation of the world in some respects, surely we, with our larger territory and our more favorable circumstances, will be heard of yet in the councils of the world and in the progressive elements which constitute the higher civilization.

Whatever strength we may get to-night from gatherings like these, ought to go to contribute to make this great Dominion what Scotland is in its identity, in its individuality, in its adaptability and its love for the beautiful, the true, the holy, the pure and the refined.

To-night the world is girdled with the songs of "Auld Lang Syne." The Scotchman in Hong Kong clasps hands with the Scotchman in Peru, with the Scotchman in Australia, with the Scotchman in Ceylon, in India—the whole world clasps hands to-night, singing "Should auld acquaintance be forgot?" No other nation can boast of that universality, that loyalty to Canada; for great as Scotland was and is to me and to you—

"There is no land like our land,
Where, mistress of our own,
We lead the breed of Empire,
To guard the ancient throne,
And the old land keeps a welcome
For her kin across the sea:
But this land is our land
And Canada for me!

"There is no land like our land:
Our day is at the dawn;
Our waking stirs the nations—
We are no feeble spawn.
And the old land keenly listens
And the alien frowns to see;
But this land is our land,
And Canada is free!"

We can now see what Mr. Ross's ideals were in working for higher standards of education. Much as he admired the eloquence and power of the British Parliament and the dignity of royalty; much as he admired Scotland and the land of his forbears, and much as he rejoiced in Scottish blood with its legacy of Scottish poetry and Scottish song, his aim was the exalting of Canada.

For many years Mr. Ross was a member of the Gaelic Society, and took great pleasure in attending its meetings, and many a joke was passed on him by his brother members for his Gaelic speeches. No one enjoyed these jokes more than Ross, who was quite well aware that he was not very proficient in the Gaelic language. His mistakes were often very amusing, and generally called forth applause and roars of laughter. To make amends, Ross would then fall back on his English. A third personal recollection of Ross as given by Dr. Cl. Campbell, of London, to the *Advertiser:*

"Time, the middle of the 'eighties; place, a Grand Trunk train. We had both entered the same car, from Montreal to Toronto, and spent most of the day in conversation. No more charming travelling companion could be desired. We talked of many things, among others the progress of prohibition sentiment and his relation to the Temperance Movement. I asked him how many Conservative prohibitionists gave him their support. He smiled as he answered. 'Conservatives are always loyal to their party. I cannot expect help from

them, but I can work through my own party. Not long since the liquor trade had as much influence in one party as in the other, but prohibition is growing stronger among the Liberals every day. I am not foolish enough to insist on its adopting a policy which at present would only lead to its defeat, but we are going as fast as we can, and the time will come when prohibition will be a leading plank in the Liberal platform. I am working for that and hope to see it.'"

Chapter XVI

PREMIER OF ONTARIO

1899-1905

SIR OLIVER MOWAT retired from the Premiership of Ontario in 1896 and entered the Liberal Government under Sir Wilfrid Laurier. His mantle fell upon the Hon. A. S. Hardy. Mr. Hardy retired on account of ill health in October, 1899, and Mr. Ross was called by His Honor the Lieutenant Governor to take his place. Mr. Ross accepted, but, as he says himself, "though greatly honored I felt my tenure of office would not be long." The Liberal star was in the descendent. A variety of causes conspired to make it a time of crisis. The Liberals had been in power since December, 1871—the first Liberal Ministry of Ontario having been formed during that year, with the Hon. Edward Blake as leader—nearly twenty-eight years, and Time is a great destroyer of parties as well as of all things mortal. By a peculiar process it devitalizes party organizations and weakens party enthusiasm. Ross realized this.

During all of those twenty-eight years Sir Oliver Mowat had managed to hold the confidence of the people, but in the election of 1894, though returned with a small majority, the political cry, "It's time for a change," took hold of the community.

Mr. Hardy, though one of the ablest and most attractive men Ontario ever produced, received only a majority of eleven in the election of 1895, showing that these qualities did not count. Ontario was becoming more Conservative. Then, as Ross said "There were cross currents produced by discussions on separate schools and on prohibition, and indeed various other influences, less apparent, which might at any time become strong enough to reduce the narrow majority in the House and country; but what was perhaps even more dangerous was the feeling of perfect security of the Liberal party in the impression of power long maintained, without any necessity for the usual activity to secure success."

"When Mr. Ross became Premier in 1899 he was expected, by his brilliant talents, to redeem the fortunes of the Government on which the electorate of Ontario had already practically served notice to quit, and that he managed to keep it in power so long was a marvel to independent workers." —*The Presbyterian.*

Yet, notwithstanding all the difficulties Mr. Ross clearly saw confronting him, he took hold of the reins of Government nothing daunted, with courage, energy and optimism, or as *The Canadian Courier* put it: "Ross was not unaware of the growing change, but he did not shirk the conflict, and accepted the onerous position of Prime Minister when conditions were decidedly unfavorable to his party. He infused new life into the Liberals

and succeeded in rallying them to his support with a good deal of the old-time vigor and enthusiasm."

Speaking of his party, Ross said: "Of the loyalty of the party, in the main, I had no doubt, and my Cabinet was one of undoubted ability, and equally anxious with myself to maintain the records of past achievements." Speaking of this Cabinet Ross said: "One of the first questions I asked them was where can we find spheres of operation that will satisfy the public that we have the courage and initiative to maintain the records of our predecessors?" The first field (though not entirely new) that would command public attention and be of real benefit to the Province, was the opening up and developing of the district lying between the Canadian Pacific Railway and Hudson Bay now known as New Ontario. In order to do this Mr. Ross, the first year of his administration, directed the Commissioner of Crown Lands to fit out a party of sufficient strength to explore thoroughly and report on soil, timber, geological formation, waterways and so forth. Ten parties were accordingly organized. Each party was accompanied by a surveyor, a geologist and an expert on soil. These parties, after several months, returned and reported "A veritable storehouse of wealth"—a clay belt of 16,000,000 acres of arable land extending from New Liskeard to Lake Nipigon. The duty of the government, Mr. Ross said, to open up this new part was now obvious. Mr. Ross, always quick to

respond to the call of duty, did not fail at this time, for in vision he got a glimpse of the coming greatness of the Northern Hinterland. In order to further the settlement of this clay belt and to furnish an outlet for timber and other forest products, Mr. Ross had the courage to project and construct the first railway owned by a Canadian Province—(the Bill for this passed 1902). This railway ran from North Bay northwards. A hundred miles of it was completed before Ross retired. It is known as the Temiskaming and Northern Railway.

"But for the large vision and bold initiative of Premier Ross, Ontario's huge territory beyond North Bay would be still as empty and desolate as Ungava."—*Toronto Globe.*

After the Transcontinental Railway was built it was decided to push the Temiskaming and Northern Railway still further north and connect the railway system of Old Ontario with the Western Provinces. Consequent upon the building of the Temiskaming and Northern Railway enormous discoveries of gold and silver have been made within or near the district. The mines of the Cobalt have already yielded one hundred million dollars worth of silver and the gold mines at the Porcupine have yielded many more. To-day they are regarded as the richest in the world, while many prosperous towns and villages are fast springing up.

1902.

In 1902 Mr. Ross found himself in the throes of another election. The Liberal majority was reduced to four. "This did not look," said Mr. Ross, "as if my Administration was very acceptable to the country. The idea of resigning, weak though we were, would not be entertained by my party friends. Public opinion was fickle and might soon turn in our favor." The desire to conquer difficult things was a part of Ross's real make up. Speaking to his sister of his ultimate chances to "win out," he said: "It would be gr-and, Maggie, gr-and" (with the Scotch burr) "but Napoleon needed an army."

Speaking of this campaign the *Globe* said: "Mr. Ross's vigorous campaign throughout Ontario in the spring of 1902, almost singlehanded, has probably never been surpassed by any Canadian public man for its resourcefulness in argument and for its inspiring eloquence.

"The majority at this General Election (1902) fell to less than five. Throughout the period to the next General Election (1905) there was, through party feeling, much undeserved abuse, but Mr. Ross retained a buoyancy and aggressive spirit *which frequently won praise* from his adversaries.

"In the General Election of 1902 it was his gallantry and courage which, in spite of many adverse circumstances 'plucked the flower safely out of the nettle danger.' Like Roderick Dhu, 'one

blast upon his bugle horn was worth a thousand men.' The successful result of the subsequent bye-elections was chiefly due to his personal magnetism and the crushing defeat of the Provincial Liberal party in January, 1905, was due to causes beyond his control and for which others were responsible. He was a "bonnie fechter," though constantly suffering from rheumatism. His energy of mind overrode all physical obstacles and enabled him to share the joy of combat, where a man of less courage would have become a valetudinarian."—*C. R. W. Biggar's "Life of Mowat," Vol. II, page 714.*

In 1902 Mr. Ross had a special invitation to be present at the Coronation of King Edward and Queen Alexandra at Westminster Abbey. Had Mr. Ross consulted his personal feelings he would have declined, not feeling physically strong, however in his representative capacity he felt it to be his duty and privilege. He was accompanied by his son Duncan (now Judge Ross) who looked after his every comfort and business generally.

Mr. Ross had, when abroad, the honor of being a guest of Sir Gilbert Parker at a dinner. Many distinguished noblemen and statesmen were also guests on that occasion. "After dinner," relates Mr. Ross, "we retired to the drawing room and it occurred that Mr. Chamberlain (Right Hon. Joseph) sought me out. I suppose he knew I was Premier of the Province of Ontario and entitled to a little attention. One of the questions he asked

was, 'I understood the Liberal Party has been a long time in power in your Province. How long?' I said, 'Not very long; we are just in our thirty-first year, that is all.' He said, 'You should have been in and out two or three times in that period.' I said, 'That may be, Mr. Chamberlain, but if you happened to be Premier you would not like your reign cut short just when, for some constitutional reason, it might be desirable.' 'That's not the point,' he said; 'the point is this—unless there is a change of party every act passed in your term of office will be charged against you as the policy of the Government in legislation, on party grounds. If you retire, the succeeding Government will either repeal your legislation or adopt it. If they adopt it, then it is as much theirs as yours, and they are as responsible for it as you were when you were in power, and instead of being a political it becomes a national legislation.' I replied, 'A very important constitutional point, disclosed to me for the first time.'"

The year 1902 was fraught with much sorrow as well as with much responsibility. The sudden death of Mrs. Ross came as a great shock to both himself and his family, and had it not been for the loving sympathy, at this time, of his children, with whom he had always kept in closest touch, he might have collapsed.

A number of capitalists from New York undertook the development of water power on the St. Mary's River for the manufacture of pulp and

paper. More power was developed than was required for this purpose; so the idea was conceived of erecting rolling mills for the manufacture of steel rails and other steel products. Certain concessions of forest lands and certain rights in ore were granted by the Government, on condition that the company would open up the country for settlement. The American capitalists were overtaken by the financial panic of 1903 and the project brought to bankruptcy. The Government, by prompt aid of $2,000,000, saved the situation, including the huge steel industry at Sault Ste. Marie. The benefit to the country already derived from these industries proves that the action of the Government was opportune and wise.

Early in Mr. Ross's regime the three companies to which the Government had assigned the right of using the waters of the Niagara River for the purpose of generating electrical power, had completed their work. The companies were to pay the Government a rental based on the amount of power produced. How to manipulate this power in order to serve the best interests of every one concerned was the problem. To this end, in 1903, the Legislature authorized municipalities interested in securing electricity for industrial purposes to appoint a Commission of representatives of their own choice to take such steps as they deemed expedient for the transmission of electricity from the Falls to any point required, the municipalities concerned to be liable for charges in-

curred. The Commission appointed is known as the Hydro-Electric Commission, and reported just before Mr. Ross retired.

Another important measure of the Ross government was the appointment of a Good Road Commission. The business of this Commission was to meet the urgent need for the improvement of roads and highways, especially those leading to market towns. The sum of $1,000,000 was set aside for this purpose. County Councils could draw from this fund an amount proportionate to the amount raised by assessment for the improvement of the roads in their own county. This proved a most beneficial move, as a number of counties took advantage of it. The standard and the kind of roads was set by the Government; so the people's money was wisely spent.

The Ross Government also encouraged "industry" by setting apart $375,000 for the manufacture of beet root sugar.

The Ross Government was criticized, not so much because of its "forward moves," which had all proved a success, thus showing they were opportune, but because "criticism was in order"—the right way to treat a government that had "lived long enough." Speaking of the work of the Government as outlined, Mr. Ross said: "While these were some of the larger measures of the Government projected, I know of nothing to which attention was called that we neglected."

In 1900 Mr. Ross took a short trip to Washington. He was anxious to visit some of the Universities in order to acquire accurate knowledge, first hand, of their educational systems. During that visit he spent a most interesting time in the galleries of the Senate. Congress was in session. There was heat in the atmosphere as well as in the debate, and every speaker aimed at drawing blood. Two of the senators had crossed swords. (Mr. Ross was much amused at the subterfuge used). One, replying, said: "If I were outside this chamber I would characterize the Senator from Mississippi as a liar, scoundrel and a villain; but I know I cannot apply these terms to him in this chamber, and I do not use them in my capacity as a member of the Senate. But they are my sentiments, nevertheless, and the Hon. Senator can make the most of them." Altogether it was tantalizing, the othe senator knowing the rules of the House received it with an indifferent smile.

Ross had been at church—Old St. Andrew's, Toronto. In a few oratorical sentences and burning words of passionate zeal for the good of his fellow-men Rev. Dr. Milligan had settled several questions of wide significance that the Cabinet of the Ontario Legislature had sat upon every night of the preceding week. The benediction pronounced, Ross rushed out of the church, made away for his coupé—anger and sorrow flitting alternately across his tired face. As soon as seated (the writer was with him) he burst out: "Why don't those

preachers give us the Gospel? The Gospel" (pathetically). "I can't understand why intelligent and good-intentioned men attempt to settle complex questions to which they have given no thought, and in a few minutes. If Milligan knew more about his subject he would have said less" (Ross was angry) "this morning. After this what can I hope to expect from the public?"

Mr. Ross and his supporters had indeed to face many difficult problems during his regime—problems not of his making, but which came to light in his time. One of the most perplexing of these problems was the total prohibition of the liquor traffic. Mr. Mowat, Mr. Ross's predecessor, was a strong advocate of Prohibition. He was anxious to be as aggressive in promoting temperance legislation as far as such legislation would be made to serve the best interests of the country. But even more aggressive than Mowat was Ross himself, who supported him in every possible way.

Replying to a delegation in 1893, that waited upon him in regard to a Bill introduced by Mr. G. F. Marter, Member for North Toronto, to prohibit the *importation, manufacture* and *sale* of intoxicating liquor as a beverage, Mr. Mowat said: "There is no use in a nominal prohibition; No use in putting a prohibition law on the statute books if it cannot be enforced. The Government opposed the Marter Bill, nor did they give any definite pledge to the Prohibition deputation. They were, nevertheless, anxious to advance the cause of

Prohibition so far as this could be constitutionally and effectively done. To this end, two lines of action were necessary: first, the ascertainment of the exact jurisdiction of the Provincial Legislature (to find this out the question had been referred to the Court of Appeal), and, secondly, the determination, so far as possible, of the state of public feeling on the subject.

At the Municipal election in 1894 a plebiscite vote was taken, and the people expressed themselves in favor of prohibition. A month after this vote another deputation of temperance workers waited on Mr. Mowat, asking him to declare in favor of the total prohibition of the liquor traffic. Mr. Mowat replied to the delegation thus: "The vote of the people removes all difficulty about it being the demand of the people. If the Privy Council decides that we have the jurisdiction to pass a prohibitory law, and I am still Premier, I will introduce a bill for that purpose." Mr. Mowat had the voice of the people, but he had not the mandate from the Privy Council, so could not act. This decision was not given till after Mr. Mowat retired from office, 1896.

That the Provincial Legislature had the right to prohibit, within its bounds, the sale of liquor as a beverage, was the decision of the Privy Council. The temperance workers insisted that, as Sir George W. Ross was Sir Oliver Mowat's legitimate successor, he should fulfil Mr. Mowat's promise and introduce a Bill at once for the total pro-

hibition of the liquor traffic. Six years had passed since Mr. Mowat had given his promise, and in the meantime the tables had been reversed. Mr. Ross had the mandate from the Privy Council but he did not have the voice of the people. The electorate had changed. Then, too, public opinion fluctuates. It could not be forced.

From early manhood Mr. Ross had seen Prohibition as a golden gate opening into "Fields Elysian." He longed to open it. Alone he could not. With strong support he could. Could he count on support at this time? In order to find this out he called a caucus of the Liberal members of the Legislature to consider the question, not so much as a party question, but to ascertain, as he said, whether public opinion in the constituencies represented by Liberal members would sustain such a measure. The caucus met, and Mr. Ross declared that the question was considered without prejudice or hostility. All admitted its importance, and respect for the various organizations engaged in its promotion. Out of fifty-two members only fourteen had any confidence that their constituencies would support the measure.

Many of these men were almost as strong advocates of temperance as Ross himself; so their opinions could not be ignored. Instead, then, of a Bill for prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquor by direct legislation, Mr. Ross introduced a Bill to submit the question to a referendum, with the proviso that if the majority of all the electors on

the voters' lists for the Province voted "yes" the total prohibition of the liquor traffic would take effect by Royal Proclamation. The vote polled under the referendum was not sufficient to bring the Act into operation. The Temperance workers were keenly disappointed and the Government censured even bitterly, but were the conditions most reasonable? No Government could hope to enforce prohibition without the support of at least a majority of the votes of the Province, was the first stand taken by Mr. Mowat. No worker could have been more disappointed at the result of the referendum than Ross. The hope of a lifetime crushed; but was not the wisdom of his action justified?

The strain of carrying on the Government after the election of 1902, with impending bye-elections, was very great. "The Government machinery is not adequate to the work it has to do. Why strain it any longer," he said to the writer. Ross's position was becoming unbearable. In 1904 he decided to dissolve the House. As to his next step, he would consult his supporters in the House and perchance the party. Would he resign or would he appeal to the country? was the question. Appeal to the country was the answer. Again Ross broached the prohibition question. It was still the paramount question with him. That the country was not ready for such advanced legislation was the decision of his supporters in the House. "Is this the voice of the party as a whole?"

he asked. To get this voice a caucus of the party was called in Massey Hall, Toronto. Would they support their leader's advanced Temperance Policy? No, they would not! "Gentlemen," said Mr. Ross, "if defeat should come I would rather go down on this issue than on any other." "But why defeat the object for which you have worked so long? Prohibition will come in due time. To bring defeat at this time would only delay matters. We will support the most advanced policy on Temperance that the electorate would, as we think, sanction;" and that was the only measure that could be enforced was the concensus of party opinion.

The election took place January, 1905, and the Government was defeated. The beginnings of this defeat, as noted, were before Ross's day, and the forces that made it inevitable were for the most beyond his control. For thirty-three years the Liberal star, that had been so clearly visible, disappeared below the horizon.

Speaking of his term of office Mr. Ross declared: "What we did in every emergency was regarded as the best that could have been done under the circumstances, and there were no regrets as to party tactics or public policy. We had our day, and there was no sadness of farewell when we stepped back into the ranks of private citizenship."

Mr. Ross took the defeat of the Government as the natural course of events. As leader of the Opposition for two years he supported every measure that he thought would be of benefit to the

Province. During these years his undaunted courage and energy under so much physical suffering was marvellous. It was with difficulty, owing to his infirmity, that he attended to his duties in the House. For this reason all other engagements had to be cancelled. His time, apart from Parliament, he spent in writing in his library. In these years he produced "Getting into Parliament and After" and "The Senate of Canada."

In May, 1907, Sir Geo. W. Ross married Mildred, eldest daughter of the late John Peel, of London, Ontario. Lady Ross was a sister of the late Paul Peel, the eminent painter. Lady Ross was herself a noted sculptor and painter. Beside portrait busts of well-known public men, which she executed for the Art Gallery of the Educational Department, she sculptored the bust of Laura Secord for the public monument to that heroine unveiled at Lundy's Lane in 1901.

Chapter XVII

THE PARLIAMENT OF CANADA—IN THE SENATE

1907

IN 1907 Mr. Ross was appointed to the Senate of Canada. Sir Wilfrid Laurier was then Premier. Mr. Ross accepted, and having accepted he was no longer an exponent of party politics from the platform or from his seat in Parliament, as the Senate, by its Constitution, is non-partisan. Mr. Ross had spent eleven years in the House of Commons and twenty-four years in the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and comparative retirement, with modified activities, Mr. Ross stated, had not the same attraction for him as the more public field of politics. From boyhood Ross loved a free fight, and the joy of battle, he declared, such as a debate across the House, gave him great satisfaction.

Outlining the duties of the Senate, Mr. Ross said: "The duties of the Senate and the House of Commons (except as to money and revenue) are co-ordinate. Both Houses are under an equal obligation to keep pace with public opinion by crystalizing its aspirations into Acts of Parliament. Both Houses are equally bound to see that every Bill to which they give assent is expressed in language clear and unambiguous; that without it no

dishonest principle lies concealed and that behind it no selfish interests can profit by it to the disadvantage of the public. But while the legislative duties of both Houses are constitutionally equal, the usages of Parliament, which sometimes narrow as well as broaden down from precedent to precedent, have very largely limited the labor of the Second Chamber in Canada to the task of perfecting legislation of the Lower House, or of amending measures designed to subserve political, rather than public, interests or of delaying or rejecting legislation often too important in character to be passed without a direct mandate from the people."

The following incident is related by the late Dr. Cl. Campbell (in London *Advertiser*): "Mr. Ross was lying on the couch in his study, suffering from rheumatism, but bright and cheerful as ever. We talked of some municipal reforms I had in my mind, of which he approved. I intimated I thought I was getting too old to take up new schemes. 'Oh, nonsense,' was the prompt rejoiner; 'a man is never too old to work for what he thinks right if he has the strength to work. I am much older than you but I have many years of work and fight before me yet.'

"So I have before me these four pictures (the other three had been given): The young man testing his powers in a rustic hall; the young parliamentarian preaching the gospel of Canadianism; the Cabinet minister working for Social Reform in face of avowed opponents and luke-warm friends; the

veteran statesman, rising superior to the inertia of age, the pain of disease, and the reverses of politics—still ready to continue the fight for his country and for humanity."

Before Mr. Ross could be sworn in by his Majesty's Commission as Honourable Member of the Senate of Canada, he had to resign his position as member for West Middlesex.

May the writer here pay, in grateful acknowledgement, a tribute to the electors of West Middlesex. When Mr. Ross, a young, inexperienced man, came for the first time to solicit the patronage of the Liberal electorate of West Middlesex, they did not scorn his inexperience nor question his ability. They took him as they found him, worked for him, fought for him, if not with gloves, with the strength of purpose and of will to win out. In that they succeeded, carrying him through with honors. To many their success was a surprise, to none more than to Ross himself. The tide against him was at times so strong that had it not been for their staunch and loyal support he could not have carried out against it. For thirty-five years they stood by him through sunshine and shadow, through good report and evil report, and when he could no longer carry the flag they answered to the call of his standard bearer and came with their strong hands and warm hearts and, while older and more experienced men fell by the way, carried him to victory.

Mr. Ross declared: "Parting with West Middlesex was a terrible wrench. I had received the votes of three generations and had rocked the cradles of some of my most active supporters. Then I was to part with the veterans of 1872, noble men whom the National Policy could not seduce from their allegiance; with the avenging scouts of 1882, whose blood was stirred by the Gerrymander specially directed against me; with the serried battalions that stood by me during the twenty-four years I held a seat in the Legislative Assembly—all these and many other associations dear to me."

"How could I sever these silken cords into which were twined the dearest memories of my life without the most painful feelings of regret?

"Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes
And fondly broods with miser care
Time but the impression deeper makes
As streams their channels deeper wear."

Like a general who had discovered a new field for conquest, Mr. Ross gathered all his forces, physical and mental, and brought them to play on his work as Senator. The new field was richer and broader than he had anticipated. In exploring it he found avenues of service on behalf of his country which enlisted all the experiences he had gathered heretofore.

On the death of Sir Richard Cartwright, Mr. Ross was made leader of the Senate. In 1910 he was further honoured. Knighthood was conferred upon him by King George.

Mr. Ross's attitude in the Senate was characterized with the same free, independent spirit that had marked his work in the House of Commons or in the Legislative Assembly. He had the courage to stand fearlessly, irrespective of party or friend, for the best adapted to promote the well-being of his country.

"O give me the man who is willing to sink
Half his present repute for his freedom to think,
And when he has thought, be his cause strong or weak,
Will sink t'other half for his freedom to speak."

In 1911 Mr. Ross outspokenly opposed the Liberal party's policy regarding Reciprocity, and the facts he gave were used by the opponents of Reciprocity throughout the Dominion.

In 1912, under Sir Robert Borden, Ross as strongly opposed Borden's proposal to provide three empty *Dreadnoughts* for the British Navy.

"Burke's claims before the electors of Bristol for perfect freedom of action as a member of Parliament may," (says Ross, in his book, "Senate of Canada"), "with equal force be made by every member of the Senate." Mr. Burke said: 'Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion his high respect; their business his unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasure, his satisfaction to

theirs, and, above all, ever and in all cases to prefer their interests to his own. But his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure; no, nor from the Law and the Constitution. They are a trust from Providence for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not of his industry only, but his judgment, and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.'"

Speaking from experience, Mr. Ross said: "The leadership of the Senate is beset with fewer difficulties than that of the Commons. Usually not more than one-fourth of the legislation of a Session originates in the Senate. When Bills come up from the Commons they require much less labor to perfect them, even when revision is necessary, than to consider them as originally drafted. As to Bills originating in the Senate, much greater labor is involved."

In eight years' Liberal majority in Senate and Liberal majority in the House of Commons:

Total Bills before the Senate.....	714
(a) Amended.....	258
(b) Rejected.....	17

In two years with Liberal Senate and Conservative majority in the House of Commons:

Total Bills before the Senate.....	415
(a) Amended.....	60
(b) Rejected.....	1

Speaking of the power of the Senate Mr. Ross declared: "The Senate of Canada has a sphere of usefulness not yet cultivated to any extent, which if entered upon would increase its influence and make it a more powerful factor in the body politic. The conservation of our natural resources; the improvement of the sanitary conditions of our cities; the development of our foreign countries; the cultivation of better international relations and other kindred subjects, are all within the purview of its Constitutional functions, and are worthy of the attention of all its members. *To form public opinion is just as useful as to direct it.*

"To attempt to review the life of Sir George Ross and the public services he rendered to his native Province and the Dominion would," said Hon. Mr. Lougheed, the Government leader in the Senate, after announcing the passing of Sir George Ross; "be largely to review the history of Canada. Not a Canadian but felt proud of Sir George Ross, whenever he spoke on public occasions. We, in the Senate, feel proud that his contributions to the discussion of public questions grace the pages of our *Hansard* as models of Parliamentary eloquence and discussion. Not only had he eloquent speech, but he wielded the pen of a ready writer, and few libraries in Canada but contain valuable works written by our late colleague. An author of wide and experienced knowledge, the literary works he left are a tribute to that marvellous industry and broad knowledge which always characterized his

public life. Few men possessed more personal charm than the late Sir George Ross. His personality was one that peculiarly summoned in his behalf the affection of those who came into contact with him, and notwithstanding the fact that for years he was the victim of physical affliction which would have overwhelmed most men, we always found him taking a particularly cheerful outlook upon life. His ripe judgment, his long experience, his Parliamentary knowledge as a legislator of forty years, were a valuable contribution to the work which devolves upon this chamber."

Senator Kerr, as an associate and friend of Sir George Ross for many years, thanked Hon. Mr. Lougheed for the words which had just fallen from his lips. "No man," he said, "has done so much as Sir George to promote the cause of Education in Ontario. He had been honored by his sovereign with knighthood, and had occupied many distinguished posts in public and business life. He had been a voluminous and able writer. His oratory was of a high order, his logic being strong and his eloquence captivating. It had been well said that he was a monarch of oratory. Beloved by his associates, he was known for capacity both at home and abroad. His career was a record of usefulness to his country and in his death he had bequeathed to Canada the memory of a life of the truest loyalty to the Empire."

The stalwart Canadianism and the broad-visioned politics of Sir George Ross are well summed up in his

last public utterance. His farewell message to the people of Canada is given in his last words in the Senate, in concluding his speech on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, on January 22nd:

"Now let us apply ourselves to the great problems that lie before us. That is my policy, whether I am here or elsewhere. Canada has to confront tremendous problems. We are on the margin of a future which no one can predict. We have a country as large as the Continent of Europe. We are the forerunners of a tremendous destiny which should weigh on the minds of every one of us. If a navy is necessary to the defence of the Empire, let us make a Bill to which both parties will agree. And in whatever respect legislation is necessary for strengthening the institutions of this country; for assimilating our foreign population; for furnishing suitable transportation; for deepening our harbors; for strengthening the ties between us and the Empire; for extending our Commerce on the Seven Seas; for standing as prominently as we ought to stand before the nations of the world as a great commercial people, thoroughly independent, leaning on no arm, not even the arm of the Empire, let us work out our own destiny in our own way. Let us stop quarreling about matters of mere party difference and let us join hands; let there be no discord of race or religion. The task is large enough to demand all the powers we possess. To that task this Senate, I hope, is willing to address itself, as is the House of Commons."

Chapter XVIII

THE PASSING OF SIR GEORGE W. ROSS.

"A NATION-BUILDER has passed in the death of Sir Geo. W. Ross."

"A busy and exemplary life has just closed."

"A career of a brilliant and devoted servant of his country and of humanity is ended."

"Sir George William Ross has finished his work. The Ex-Premier mourned throughout the Province. His life was an example to younger Canada."

"Incidents and facts in the life of the Grand Old Man of Middlesex, who rose to eminence as *statesman, educationist, writer and orator.*"

The above were a few of the headings from the daily papers on Monday, March 9th, 1914, with reference to the passing of Sir George W. Ross on Saturday, March 7th, at eight o'clock.

Sir George was suddenly stricken in Ottawa, after his address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, on January 22nd. The chamber was overheated and the physical effort was too much for him. On January 24th he was taken to the General Hospital, Toronto, and after an illness of six weeks the end came peacefully. Sir George just seemed to sleep away.

On Thursday Sir George was bright and cheerful and showed interest in what was taking place around him. As if with a heavenly message of

hope and comfort, a grandson was born in the hospital during the day. As soon as the babe was dressed, Dr. Geo. W. Ross, jr., the babe's father, brought the child and tenderly laid him in his grandfather's arms. Sir George's face lit up with a wonderful smile. "What shall we name the babe, Father," said Dr. Ross to his father. Quick came the cheerful reply: "Why, George W. Ross of course!" And so the babe was named. Then Sir George lapsed into a state of coma, from which, however, he partially revived on Friday, and was able to give his son, Duncan, directions about sending copies of his new book, "Getting into Parliament and After," to his friends. "Don't let any of them be overlooked," were his parting words. After that he became unconscious and grew weaker until the end came.

"The Victor laid low,
With his back to the fields
And his face to the foe.
And leaving in battle
No stain on his name,
Looks proudly to heaven
From the deathbed of fame."

The body of Sir George was taken to his late home, 3 Elmsley Place, and there it lay amidst the books he loved in life, and in an atmosphere sweetened by the floral tributes of those who revered and respected him in the zenith of his activities and in the declining years of his life.

Although not unexpected, the death of Sir George W. Ross was received with a distinct shock by the whole Province, and ere many hours had passed messages of sympathy and condolence began to pour into the family residence on Elmsley Place, and friends from far and near gave expression to their feelings of respect and admiration for one who for half a century had been prominent in the public life of Ontario.

The flag at the Parliament Buildings was ordered at half-mast as soon as news of Sir George's death was announced, and in respect to his memory the House formally adjourned.

On Tuesday, at 10.30 o'clock, the funeral services at the House were conducted by Rev. G. M. Milligan, LL.D., D.D., pastor emeritus of Old St. Andrew's Church, where Sir George had been an elder for thirty-one years, and with whom Sir George enjoyed a lifelong and intimate acquaintance. Dr. Milligan was assisted by Rev. Prof. Law, Knox College, and Rev. S. Harper Gray, pastor of Old St. Andrew's.

During the hour of this service the church bells in Strathroy tolled and the public schools were closed and business suspended.

Though it was the wish of the late Sir George that his funeral services should be of a simple character, several hundred representative citizens and friends could not resist the opportunity to pay their last respects and follow the remains to their last resting place in Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

The Duke of Connaught was officially represented by Col. S. M. Pellatt. There were also representatives from the Senate, the Dominion and Provincial Governments, the city of Toronto, the town of Strathroy, the Liberal Association of Strathroy, the Liberal Association of West Middlesex, the Masonic Order, the Gaelic Society, the Sons of Scotland, the British Empire Club, Sons of Temperance, Session of Old St. Andrew's Church, Clan Ross in America, and the Globe Printing Company; and many other companies and organizations to which Sir George belonged were also represented.

Among the noted men who attended in a representative capacity and otherwise were Sir John Gibson, Hon. F. R. (Judge) Latchford, Senator Jaffray, Mr. P. C. Larkin, Hon. Geo. P. Graham, and Mr. R. B. Beldon. Honorary pallbearers were Mayor Hocken, Controller McCarthy, Prof. C. K. Clark (of Toronto General Hospital), Dr. Haywood, Senator Watson, Senator Carr, Senator Bostock, Hon. Allen Aylesworth, Dr. Pyne, Hon. Mr. Hearst (of the Provincial Government), N. W. Rowell, R. J. McCormick, M.P.P., Professor Law, President Falconer (of the University of Toronto), Sir James Anderson, Rev. Dr. Carman, Sheriff Cameron, Joseph Oliver, H. M. Mowat, K.C., Hartley Dewart, K.C., J. M. McEvoy, and many others.

SOME MESSAGES OF CONDOLENCE.

H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught telegraphed to his Honor Sir John Gibson, "Should be much obliged if you would kindly convey my sincere condolence to the family of the late Sir George Ross."

Earl Grey, former Governor-General of Canada, on behalf of himself and Lady Grey, wired from Wellington, New Zealand: "Our profound and heartfelt sympathy."

"Accept expression of very sincere sympathy. I myself lost one of my oldest and dearest friends; the whole country one of its noblest sons."—*Sir Wilfrid Laurier.*

"My wife and I respectfully offer to you and the family our deepest sympathy on the death of your distinguished husband, who will be long remembered as one of the ablest and most patriotic statesmen of the Empire."—*Hon. W. S. Fielding.*

Chapter XIX

EXTRACTS FROM SPEECHES AND LETTERS.

Shall Canada Always Be a Dependency of the Empire?

Reply to the toast, "The Empire" at banquet to Viscount Milner, given by the Empire Club, Oct. 28th, 1908.

REVIEWING the achievements of Canada first, Mr. Ross said: "Is it not reasonable to expect that Canadians should look forward to a larger life and a broader outlook than they now enjoy? Would we be doing justice to ourselves, to our present status, or to a certain future of great wealth and population, if we failed to aspire to a more independent and influential position in the Councils of the Empire and the World? And so the question arises, in what direction shall we look for that larger life and that greater influence to which our present status and future development appear to supply a reasonable claim?

"To this question there are but three conjectures: Annexation to the United States; an Independent Canadian Commonwealth; or Imperial Federation. The first of these, Annexation to the United States, is unthinkable. The second conjecture, an Independent Canadian Commonwealth, could be

more easily entertained. The very term 'Canadian Commonwealth' is euphonious and dignified, and tingles the lips in uttering it. A Canadian Commonwealth—the companion of the Northern Star, as the Australian Commonwealth on the other side of the globe is the companion of the Southern Cross!

"The third conjecture, Imperial Federation—what are the claims in favor of it? First—To continue our relation with the British Empire is to preserve the continuity of our institutions, our models in statesmanship and in government, and so forth. Second—It would place Canada in filial relation with the other colonies of the Empire. Third—It would be a source of strength to the Empire. Fourth—It would greatly expedite the business of the British Parliament.

"Imperial Federation is a proposal to bind together under one Central Government the United Kingdom and the self-governing Colonies, and, as in any federation the parties to such a compact must stand upon equality, it would follow that under Imperial Federation the powers and privileges of the Parliaments of the Federation would be on a parity. The Central Government would have the power to declare war. The right possessed by the British Cabinet to declare war without reference to Parliament is an undesirable centralization of power."

Mr. Ross's Tribute to Mowat—Biography by C. R. W. Biggar, M.A., K.C.

"Any analysis of the character of a successful public man, no matter how impartial or accurate, will not disclose the secret of his power, any more than the scalpel of the anatomist will disclose fully the physical power of the person whose nerves and muscles are open to inspection. When analysis is exhausted, either as to mental or physical qualities, there remain the intangible elements of tact and judgment, by which the most extraordinary results are accomplished, which admit of no explanation by any ordinary process of reasoning. It is when the thing is done, when the success has been achieved, that the onlooker, to whom the situation was perplexing if not mysterious, recognizes how simple are the methods of genius and how short are the processes by which it is attained. Sir Oliver Mowat possessed this wonderful gift of solving difficulties apparently insurmountable, perhaps the crowning feature of his political career."

Tribute to Mowat After His Death.

"It is very gratifying to feel that in the early interpretation of the Constitution of the Province, there was a statesman placed—shall I say providentially?—in such a position as to maintain the Sovereignty of this Legislature and in this way give to the Provincial Assembly a dignity and importance which otherwise it should not have. We could

not brook the idea now that this Legislature is in any sense subordinate to the Dominion Parliament. The Crown, as represented by the Lieutenant-Governor, is a source of honor, as much as His Majesty is a source of honor in Great Britain."

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF CLAN ROSS.

"To be a clansman in the true sense of the word means a sense of brotherhood, ready in any emergency to repel an invader, to protect the weak and assist a fellow clansman in adversity or need. This feeling of brotherhood is an inheritance to be prized and is a never-failing fountain of loyalty which is calculated to promote unity in national affairs and a spirit of kindness and citizenship in all its forms and duties. In bringing together the members of the Clan Ross you are promoting this unity and connecting a new land with the traditions of a race whose skill in arms and art and song have given them a place in the history of the world, of which our fellow clansmen, I am sure, are proud. In this history, the Ross Clan has played its part. To recall the story of its achievements and of the race to which they belong is the object of our Association. What has made Scotland great will make your country and my country great. Energy of character, integrity of purpose, nobility of ideals and a conscience void of offence before God and man are qualifications for citizenship which it is our desire as clansmen to cultivate, and if these

qualities prevail and maintain the ascendency no future declaration of independence will be necessary to perpetuate the honor and glory of either country.

"'Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band
That knots me to thy rugged strand.'"

From Speech on the Making of the Canadian Constitution, 1906.

"And now the goal is reached; the copy is approved; Canada has a new name. It is no longer a Province; it is a 'Dominion.' The delegates in London would have called it the 'Kingdom' of Canada, but Lord Derby substituted the name 'Dominion', and so it has been ordered. A good name, too—better than 'Kingdom'—without a king—a name of good Latin stock, '*Dominus*,' a master. Dominion of Canada, therefore, means the masterhood of Canada. That is, we Canadians are Dominionites, the Constitutional masters of Canada. That is what the Conference secured for us. Who will not say 'God Bless the Fathers of Confederation?' 'Dominion' is a growing name, too, now applied, by the Colonial Office, to New Zealand and incorporated into His Majesty's title of His Majesty's Dominions beyond the seas. Forty birthdays have passed since July, 1867. So few, and yet how full of promise and optimism and progress. But is it only a single milestone, after all, towards the goal of Canada's full-fruited day of power?

"Pray Heaven our greatness, may not fail through
craven fear of being great."

Her horoscope no man can cast. God alone knows what is in store for her. But there are men who have the divine gift of prevision, and I leave with you the picture of the future as it fell upon the patriotic eye of these men who had this gift (one picture only given here)."

Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, in the debate in Parliament on the Quebec Resolutions, February 23rd, 1865: "I look forward to the future with anticipation of seeing a country and a Government possessing great power and respectability and of being, before I die, a citizen of an immense empire built up on our part of the American Continent, where the folds of the British flag will float in triumph over a people possessing freedom, happiness and prosperity, equal to the people of any other nation on earth."

Canada and Her Navy, 1913.

On moving amendment to the Naval Aid Bill in the Senate of Canada, May 27th: "Let us not depreciate ourselves (speaking of Canada). No good can come to a man who sits in sackcloth and ashes in self-abasement and humiliation, crying out against the fates that made his position severe. The man who takes his marching orders from some prophet or seer or great leader is the man who keeps up with the procession. Let me lay down two or three fundamental principles in connection with this matter. The first fundamental principle is that nothing will thrive in the life or institutions of Canada or any other country that does not appeal to national sentiment. You cannot build up a country, no matter what it is, except on that foundation. It is true in China to-day. It is true in Japan. It has been true in England over one thousand years. The second fundamental principle I would lay down is that no great career

is possible for a nation without unity of purpose. Confederation is a unit. The thirteen colonies arranged their constitution finally in 1787, and bound themselves by solemn contract to stand together. In the Civil War they spent three billions of money, and one million men died upon the plains of Shiloh and at Gettysburg and elsewhere, and for what? They laid down their lives that the climax of Webster's speech in reply to Haine might be realized. What did he say? 'Liberty and Union, one and inseparable now and for ever!' And that cry rang through the United States as they mustered forces for the Civil War. The Union must not be broken up. The slaves must be free, and on the first of January, 1863, the shackles fell off four million slaves. It was the language of Daniel Webster that accomplished that end—it was liberty and union.

"An Imperialist! There is where I am. I belong to the Province of Ontario, federally united with the other provinces of Canada under the Crown. How can I be anything else but an Imperialist? I would be in favor of Independence, but never in favor of Annexation. As long as we are federally united under the Crown, so long I cannot help being an *Imperialist* if I am true to my obligation. The Constitution of England has kept together her colonies for two hundred years or more. It has led to the union of England and

Scotland and Ireland; it has kept the British Empire together with a palladium of civil and religious liberty. Nowhere is the atmosphere so pure; nowhere is a man's home so much his castle; nowhere can a man walk so erect and lift his forehead to the stars, as in the British Empire. That is why I am an Imperialist. In a case of emergency, the Borden Bill has nothing to offer for the defence of the Empire, except the empty shells which may be constructed in British navy yards. In the Act of 1910 (the Laurier Act) Canada could offer the full fighting force of her navy. In the one case you place ships only; in the other case what do you place? You place at the general service of the Royal Navy the officers and seamen serving in such ships or vessels or any officers or seamen belonging to the Navy. There is nothing to stop the chariot wheels of the sovereign people. This Senate will not stop them so far as I am concerned. They must go on from stage to stage, and parliaments must give way for them and houses of lords must give way for the people, and kings must lay down their heads upon the block that the sovereignty of the people might be supreme. What should we do? Find out what that is and obey the mandate. If the twentieth century is to see the full fruition of the labor of those who laid the foundation of our Dominion and planned the superstructure which should be the glory of the nations, every measure

which affects its dignity or which represents its purpose should be proportionate to the ideals of its founders. I have a great respect for the Fathers of Confederation We do not think enough of them. We are no longer infants in the night crying for the light. The day of such things is past and gone. We are no longer walking timorously the path of destiny; our pulse beats stronger and our step is firmer, for the strength of young manhood is in our loins. Not by shirking from the responsibility of man's estate; not by listening to the feeble voice of mediocrity; not by cloudbursts of patriotic emotion, will Canada be admitted into the family of nations. It is for the statesmen of to-day to set the pace for the next generation as well as for the present, and to give the national character an impulse which will fire it with a newborn enthusiasm for higher national ideals."

From Speech Given at Unveiling of Monument to Sir John A. Macdonald.

"Whatever our political differences may have been; however much we may have questioned his policy on many matters of state, it is sufficient for us to remember in the presence of this proof of the affection and respect of his fellow citizens, that he, on whose grave in Cataraqui the Maple is at this moment showering its emblematic leaves, gave to his country, amid the ravings of faction and the temptations of political strife, the offerings of a

loyalty that never faltered; that in spite of difficulties that might have baffled a weaker man, he was successful in welding, with the assistance of other great men, into a distinct, solid and, I trust, an enduring nationality, the people whom fortune or destiny had sent to our shores; that he had large conceptions and fervid hopes as to the great possibilities of the land in which we dwell, and that he left to us an unbroken record of fealty to that precious sovereign under whose beneficent sway we have enjoyed in the fullest sense every privilege which citizenship has a right to demand and which a free constitution is calculated to bestow."

Railways and International Fellowship

Address by the Honorable George W. Ross Delivered at the Tenth Annual Dinner of the American Railway Engineering Association.

"I have first to thank your President for his very kind introduction. I have been in public life in Canada for a good many years—sometimes it is not much of a recommendation for a man to be in public life. I do not know whether or not I was very influential in the Councils of the Province, still for thirty-five years I had a seat in the Parliament of Canada, and for the last three years I have been honored with a seat in the Canadian Senate. You send your best men, I understand, to the Senate of the United States.

"Now, it is very pleasant for me to know, as I am away from home, that Canada and the United States are on a peace footing. We have been on a peace footing for many years, now nearly one hundred years, and you know that is longer than my memory reaches. About one hundred years ago a few Americans raided Canada and burned down the city in which I live—the City of Toronto. It didn't matter much, it wasn't much of a place then. A few Canadians equally belligerent returned the compliment and burned down Buffalo, and that did not matter much. After a resort to raids and bad manners, and an exchange of musketry, which was of very little consequence, there was a truce, and since that time we have been on friendly terms; the better for both of us. Neither of us has anything to gain from a quarrel. If there was, we cannot tell just which would come on top; but we know there would be a great waste of powder and a great many naughty words said and a great many naughty things done. War is a mean game, which should never be played by civilized people, and as both nations are civilized, I hope the game will never be played between Canada and the United States.

"In 1830 you had only thirty miles of railway in this vast dominion. Every steel rail laid from the boundary of one State into another is an additional band to bind that State to the American Union, and every spike driven into a railroad tie is a spike fastening down the Constitution of the United

States on the whole of the forty-six States, from one ocean to another.

"There is not a doubt of it, and we in our country are becoming homogeneous in the same way. The greatest possible blessings come to a people only when there is the largest amount of intercommunication possible. That is the work of the railroad engineers, and it is in that sense that railroad engineers are nation builders. They fasten bonds which keep all parts of the nation together.

"Long may these two lands dwell together in unity. As Abraham said to Lot: 'Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee; or between my husbandmen and thy husbandmen.' Brethren! Sons of the same Anglo-Saxon stock, taught from the same Holy Scripture, reverencing the same Supreme Being, acknowledging allegiance to the same King of Heaven, and bound together by ties of common blood, there should be no rivalry between us but that of education, intelligence and the arts of peace. And that should continue down the ages till the war drum throbs no longer and the battle flag is furled in the parliament of man, in the federation of the world."

Chapter XX

CONCLUSION

BUT WHAT claim has Sir George W. Ross to be remembered by the people of Ontario and of Canada? What are the characteristics that made him so universally respected and beloved?

Perhaps his first claim is that of long service in behalf of his country—service as statesman, educationist, writer and orator. For forty-two years (1872-1914) in these capacities he devoted his life with unselfish interest to Canada. Twenty-four of these years, as Member of the Provincial Legislature, he served in behalf of his native Province. Though his sphere of action, compared with the eleven preceding years spent in the House of Commons, was thereby limited, it was none the less telling, as his work of Minister of Education reacted on the whole Dominion.

Entering Parliament shortly after Confederation, Sir George W. Ross, though not an actual framer of the Constitution as outlined in the British North America Act, became in a very real sense "A Maker of Canada." To interpret a constitution is in many respects a work as important as the actual framing of it. Sir George Ross recognized this fact, and fought to establish precedents the value of which will only be clearly seen in the light of time.

Sir George came to the Kingdom at one of the most crucial periods in the history of the Province. He launched the ship of state (which, had it not been for his steady hand at the helm, would have been shipwrecked) on a voyage of discovery.

For the youth of Canada Sir George Ross's life is worthy of study and of imitation. "He was a living example of the power of continuity of purpose and indomitable will, when linked with intelligence and high motives," and it is in the hearts of the children and youth of Canada that Sir George would wish to live; for them he lived, and worked and suffered, as perhaps no other Canadian has ever done.

"A young country does well to take careful note of all that is best in the past. The figures in the history may or may not be of heroic stature. The work done may or may not be on a grand scale. But it is foundational work, the significance of which grows with the lapse of time. Fortunate the state which, looking back upon its early builders, finds their characters stamped with the unquestioned hall-mark of truth and honor—finds their actions controlled by clear purpose and high principle. As an example and inspiration the memory of such builders cannot be too carefully preserved or too closely studied." (*Dr. Geo. R. Parkins. Preface to the Life of Sir John Beverly Robinson.*)

Mr. Ross had the courage of his convictions and irrespective of friend or foe dared for the sake of principle to stand firm when he knew the odds were against him and perhaps might even overwhelm him.

A man of principle is the principal man and Ross belongs to that class.—Biographical Dictionary, 1880.

The courage and optimism with which Sir George continued his public work and public service was phenomenal and should not be forgotten. The rheumatism from which he suffered for so many years was the result of speaking at a public meeting in a schoolhouse, and then taking a long drive in the cold to catch a train to address another meeting; and it was while in the performance of public duty—addressing the Senate—that he contracted a cold which eventually resulted in his final illness.

Few men, it has been said, had more personal charm than Sir George Ross. This was probably due to the fact of his real human interest. He forgot himself when speaking to others.

He was always moved at the sight of sorrow and ever ready to give a helping hand to the one in need, whatever that need might be.

An old Indian whose family and family-friends used to camp on the Ross farm, when Sir George was a little child, followed him all the years. Peter would come every year in the spring and ask for George who always had a kind welcome, a good dinner and a new suit of clothes for Peter. How Peter traced George to Toronto was a secret never discovered.

The leading features of his character—love of country and love of home, reverence for religion and regard for justice, loyalty to the Empire and devotion to duty—may be considered as the basis

of his success in life, the root from which sprang popular approval and regard; the means by which his reputation grew from more to more, the source of the honors conferred upon him by his King and his country, the reason for the example his career affords to all young Canadians and to all loyal citizens of this Great Dominion.—(*Words with which the biographer of the late Sir John Thompson concludes his work; also close of biography of the late Sir Oliver Mowat. These words apply equally to the character of Sir George Ross.*)

WHAT CANADA WANTS.

Canada wants men—not walking effigies,
Who smirk and smile with art polite and sport
The borrowed vesture of their richer friends;
But men of souls capacious, who can plant
The standard of their worth on noble deeds,
And dare respect their conscience and their God.

Canada wants honest men—men who shall lay
Her Empire's cornerstone secure upon
The solid granite of eternal truth,
And build her towers and all her columns hew
From the deep quarry of a nation's love.

Canada wants progressive men—men who
The stirrings of ambition feel, to join
The glorious ranks of those who lead the van
In Freedom's sacred cause, and pour the wealth
Of Heaven-born genius at their country's shrine.

Canada wants independent men—men who,
Regardless of applause, will speak the truth;
Men who will spurn a bribe and scorn to bend
In cringing self-abasement at the feet
Of titled villainy; men who have drunk
From Freedom's sacred fount, and who their necks
Will never bend to wear the bondsman's yoke;
Men from deceit who'd tear the mask and show
The knave in all his nakedness and guilt.

Canada wants virtuous men—men with their hearts
Attuned to holiness; men who will take
The Bible as the charter of their faith,
Adore the God whom it reveals, and learn
With gratitude sincere to sound His praise.

Canada wants heroic men—men who will dare
To struggle in the solid ranks of truth,
To clutch the monster error by the throat,
Hurl base oppression from her seat, break down
Her walls, and let the world with pæans
Of universal rapture usher Freedom in.

Canada wants noble men—not those who trace
Nobility through tortuous channels of
Hereditary blood, and, boasting of
Ancestral worth, swell with profound conceit
At every mention of their little selves;
But men of noble souls; men tested well
In life's great struggle, tempered in the forge
Of hard experience, and fortified against
Temptations' wiles by purity of heart;
Men who will dare assert their rights and do
What duty bids, though all the world should sneer.

Canada wants patriotic men—men who
Can feel their bosom throb at mention of
Their country's name; men whose allegiance is
Not based on selfishness, whose honesty of soul
Would scorn promotion's highest seat,
If treason were the price; men who will guard
Her soil with sacred care, and when she sounds
The trumpet of alarm, will grasp their swords
And fearless hurl destruction on her foes.

These be the men, O Canada, to spring
From out thy virgin soil; these be the men
To wield the sceptre of thy power, extend
Dominion o'er thy vast estate, and write
In history the glory of thy name.

GEORGE W. ROSS—1879.

(*Written in early years, to early elections, published in* The Globe. *Andrew Ross searched through* Globe *files for years back to find the item.*)

Chapter XXI

VALUED TRIBUTES

A MASTER of oratory.—*Globe.*

As a public speaker Sir George Ross took high rank. His Celtic eloquence early manifested itself in the felicity of speech that, cultivated during the passing years, gave him a place as one of the foremost of Canada's orators. Indeed, whether as a platform speaker or a legislative debater, he had few if any equals in Ontario, and had he been left free from the responsibilities of the Premier's office, and allowed to remain as a Minister, no man in Canada could have excelled him in finished and effective style.—*Globe* Editorial.

It is as one of the finest orators that this country ever produced that Sir Geo. Ross will be chiefly remembered.—*The Westminster.*

The Hon. George W. Ross has been described by a keen observer of public affairs as "a master of platform oratory"—in some respects almost without a superior in the Parliaments either of the country or the Church; and by another—a leading political opponent—as a Canadian whose patriotism is as great as his eloquence.—*Biggar's "Life of Mowat."*

One of Mr. Ross's outstanding characteristics was his great capacity for lucid, forceful and eloquent exposition of any subject he presented.—*N. W. Rowell.*

As a public speaker Mr. Ross had few equals in Canada. Not a Canadian but felt proud of Sir George Ross whenever he spoke on public occasions. We in the Senate feel proud that his contributions to the discussion of public questions grace the pages of our *Hansard* as models of parliamentary eloquence and discussion.—*Hon. Mr. Lougheed.*

The Hon. Sir George William Ross, who was one of the Canadians to receive the honor of knighthood upon the King's birthday, is not nearly as well known outside of his own Province of Ontario as his peculiar talents entitle him to be, a fact due to the circumstances that his public career has been largely a Provincial one. Since Sir George entered the Senate of Canada in 1907, his work has broadened and it is the concensus of opinion, not only of the members of the Senate, but of the press correspondents and all who have occasion to watch sessional affairs, that he is one of the greatest, if not actually the most perfect, orator in the Canadian Parliament to-day. The only men who can dispute the place with him are Sir Wilfred Laurier in the House of Commons and Sir Richard Cartwright in the Senate. But in some respects he is unquestionably a more finished orator than either of those renowned parliamentary speakers. Sir Wilfred makes his main points with telling effect and his perorations and occasional bursts of finished sounding eloquence carry his hearers off their feet; but there are many passages in all his

speeches which are, from an oratorical point of view, flat and commonplace. Sir Richard's speeches are even throughout, every word and sentence being properly placed and each point forcibly made. Vocabulary, grammar and rhetoric in his case are scientifically and artistically complete. Every official statement he makes in the Senate is a perfect example of plain, forceful English; but he is always the parliamentarian and his speeches, though forceful and exact, lack imagination and picturesqueness. In the case of Sir George Ross his English, while not perhaps as brusquely direct and straight cut as that of Sir Richard, is as grammatically correct and as finished, and there is studied easiness and musical balance about it which is lacking in that of the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Again, in marked contrast to Sir Wilfred Laurier, Sir George Ross, by the trickery of vocal genuflexion and nicely balanced sentences, makes the most matter of fact statements in his speeches interesting to listen to. There is not an uninteresting instant during a speech by him. Literally he holds attention from beginning to end.

Sir George's is not the purely parliamentary style which is seen at its best, perhaps, in Sir Richard and Senator Lougheed in the Senate and in Sir Wilfred Laurier and Mr. R. L. Borden in the House of Commons. Nevertheless, Sir George's more picturesque style is impressive in Parliament and attractive, for it is not long after he rises to make a set speech, before the members of the House

of Commons slip out from their own Chamber to the space allotted to them below the bar in the Senate.

The writer once heard Lord Grey, in the presence of Sir Wilfred, complimenting Senator Ross on one of his speeches and saying, "I always read your speeches over twice in the *Hansard*, and send all my extra copies containing them home to parliamentary friends in England." Although a lifelong Liberal, Sir George Ross has always been a man of independent thought. In the old days, when his party was wedded first to Free Trade, then to Commercial Union, and later to Unrestricted Reciprocity, he remained a firm and outspoken supporter of Protection for Canadian Industries. We have it on no less authority than Colonel Geo. T. Denison, that at a critical time, when many of the leaders of his party were casting their eyes in the direction of Washington, the men, principally Conservatives, who set themselves resolutely to stem the tide and turn it in the direction of active Imperialism, found an active supporter in the Hon. George W. Ross. Since being appointed to the Senate, Sir George has insisted on pursuing an independent course, voting against the Government majority upon several occasions."—*Family Herald, Montreal, July 10, 1920.*

Speaking of Gladstone's speech on Home Rule, 1886, Morley said: "Oratory is action, not words; character, will, conviction, purpose, personality." Referring to these words, Ross remarked: "And

if it is true that like begets like, what a glorious progeny oratory should produce—action, character, personality. Think of it, ye young men who are to-day standing under the illuminated ceiling of the House of Commons. Is your oratory action, rather than words? How much of it is conviction, well-reasoned and conclusive, and how much a conglomeration of bastard views whose paternity is unknown? How much of your own personality—of your own noble, manly, heaven-born self—is your oratory, and how much of it is plausible untruths, gilded insincerity, craven surrender to prejudice and expediency? How much character does it contain—character tested in the crucible of public service, pitted against temptation and meanness and cunning and still unsmirched—character that has stamped itself upon your conversation, your profession, your business? How much of these qualities pulsates in your speeches? I cannot answer. Time will tell. The speaker should feel that while on his feet he is the leader of public opinion, not its echo. He should present to his audience only the highest motives of action He should never crawl; God made him a little lower than the angels. He should do honor to his origin. Whoever fails, he should not fail in taking high ground on all questions of public and private morality and on everything that concerns the honor of the race of the nation. To cringe or fawn or bully should be equally offensive to him. 'Whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are

lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think (and speak) on these things.'"

As a Campaigner.

Sir George Ross is undoubtedly the ablest political campaigner in Ontario, of his day. Of wide experience and understanding of the life of the people, of full sympathy with the patriotic and emotional impulses of the average man and woman, as well as possessing in supreme degree the gift of felicitous and eloquent speech, he swayed his audience with marvellous influence. While practical and academic if necessary, he yet was able to throw in a touch of human nature which warmed his hearers and brought them into close sympathy. A favorite method was to work on to a close in a burst of patriotic exaltation, often ending with a quotation of poetry drawn from an almost inexhaustible memory, and leaving the audience in an ecstasy of literary and patriotic fervor. There is little doubt that no small share of credit was due to Hon. Mr. Ross's vigorous speeches for the quenching of the sentiment for annexation with the United States which within a quarter of a century grew to an almost alarming extent.—*The Globe.*

Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King.

There is much associated with the memory of Sir George Ross which gives to his name a place and a prominence possessed by few in the history of our Province. Only in a less conspicuous degree

is this true of the Dominion as a whole. His was one of the very few Ontario names which, in the years prior to the Great War, were known in all parts of the British Empire. It is natural this should be so. Sir George was in public life much longer than most men of his day, and his interest in education made him intimately known to a wide circle of acquaintances and friends. He filled, during his lifetime, positions of great responsibility, exceptional alike in their number and importance. His career, though identified for the most part with the problems and policies of his native province, began and closed in the larger arena of federal politics.

For thirty-four years Sir George represented the constituency of West Middlesex, eleven years in the House of Commons at Ottawa and twenty-three in the Ontario Legislature. He was successful in eleven electoral contests, and suffered defeat in none. He was Member of the Dominion Parliament at the age of thirty, was Minister of Education of the Province of Ontario for sixteen years, and for six years its Premier. He was Member of the Senate of Canada for seven years, and, for a short time prior to his death, was Leader of the Liberal Opposition in the Upper Chamber. This surely is a remarkable record of political achievement and public service!

It was, however, neither place nor power which won for Sir George Ross the admiration and esteem in which he was held by his contemporaries. It

was his character and breadth of outlook. His talents were the outcome of persistent and often heroic effort, under circumstances which, to one possessed of a less brave spirit, might have occasioned forfeiture of the entire account. His broad and generous sympathies caused him to feel a concern alike for the standards of the rural schoolhouse and the well-being of the British Empire.

Without a doubt, industry and integrity made Sir George Ross the able administrator he was. His platform and debating ability gave him his position of command. Too few remember that industry and integrity, and equally eloquence, are not mere matters of chance. They are a part of the very texture of the soul, the expression of much that has contributed to its most enduring struggles and profoundest experiences. Natural aptitudes and gifts may go far to render possible what is finest in the way of achievement, but without cultivation and development even they lose very soon their potential vitality.

What I recall even more vividly than his public appearances were two interviews which I had in private with Sir George, and which were separated by an interval of some twenty years. The first was at his residence in Toronto when I was an undergraduate at the University. Mr. Ross, as he was then called, was, at the time, Minister of Education. As I entered the library he was reclining on a couch. Referring to his rheumatic infirmity he asked to be excused for not attempting

to rise. He told me he was preparing a speech for an evening's meeting. He had neither book nor manuscript at hand. He said he had reached the final stages of preparation, which consisted in being sure that he had perfectly clear in his own mind all bearings of the questions to which he intended to refer, and the essential points arranged in their logical order. What seemed to the public that night an easy effort, the utterance of "the born orator," I knew to be, in fact, the fruit of wide knowledge and experience, but equally of laborious study, and the most careful systematization of thought, and training of memory, up to the very moment of speaking.

The other occasion was not dissimilar. It was in his room in the Senate shortly before the eloquent and convincing speech in which Sir George exposed the underlying motive and apparent weaknesses of the much-debated policy of contribution, and defended the policy of a Canadian Naval Service, as the most effective means of co-operation in Empire defence. The interview of the twenty years before was recalled by the wheel chair, which had just been deserted for the couch on which he was lying. He said he wanted to talk over what he had in his mind, and would welcome suggestion or criticism. It was a kindly compliment; but it was more. It afforded opportunity of gaining another glimpse of his methods of careful preparation, and of learning something of the secret of effective public speaking.

If Sir George Ross has left a name which adorns the intellectual side of our public life, it is because of his natural gifts and wide sympathies. It is even more because of the value which from earliest years he attached to education and the pains to which he went to realize for himself, and to have others appreciate, its serviceableness alike to individuals and the State.

The generation to whom Sir George Ross was best known, and which is all too rapidly passing from the scene, will thank Miss Ross for having supplemented her brother's autobiography of Parliamentary life by those intimate sidelights upon character which alone one of his own family is in a position to give, and which account most for his attainments and achievements. Even more will they appreciate the thought which has prompted her to disclose the sources of inspiration in the life of one whose name to the school boys and girls of to-day is already something of a tradition.

Laurier House, Ottawa,
July 31, 1923.

Hon. George P. Graham.

Hon. George P. Graham, who succeeded Sir George Ross as Leader of the Opposition in the Ontario Legislature, writes:

"In the passing of Sir George Ross, Canada loses her most eloquent English-speaking son. I knew him as a leader, a colleague, a friend, and he rang true at all times, and was equally strong in adversity as in success.

He brought to public life the ability and energy which enabled him, in spite of many difficulties, to rise to a prominent position in the affairs of the nation. Always cheerful, his mental balance never betrayed any indication of the affliction which was his portion during so many years of his life. In it all his mind remained clear. His tongue lost none of its wonderful powers of expression, and his disposition spread sunshine and dispelled sadness wherever he went. Personally I feel that one of my warmest and best friends has been taken.

"Ontario undoubtedly owes much to the life and work of the late Sir George. It was he who conceived the idea of exploiting the hinterland of the province by the construction of a railway into its hidden resources. The announcement that this line was to be undertaken was first made at Whitby, Ontario, and it was criticized in the Opposition press as but a plunge of the Prime Minister. History has proven the accuracy of the little Scotchman's vision, for, by the construction of the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway, the world's richest silver territory was discovered. He also predicted that the line would eventually extend to James Bay, and this extension is now actually under construction.

"As Minister of Education Sir George set a high standard, and the work of the Education Department under him became the model of not only other provinces in Canada, but of States in the Union.

"As a platform and after-dinner speaker he stood alone among English-speaking men of Canada, and his addresses at Boards of Trade dinners, banquets, etc., were the marvel of the century in which he lived.

"He was the object of many severe and unjust attacks, but through them all he maintained characteristic serenity.

"He passed away revered and beloved by the people of his native Province."

SIR JOHN GIBSON.

Sir George W. Ross was, undoubtedly, one of the leading men of his time. Many men have been known to possess remarkable ability, but have not been industrious workers, thereby failing to accomplish very much in the shape of results. Sir George was endowed with great brain power and was a diligent worker—he never gave up. Then he possessed a rare gift of ability to express his views. His command of language and facility of speaking were remarkable. His speeches were prepared by mental effort, but were rarely commited to writing, and he had the extraordinary ability to deliver an address word for word as it had been gone over in his mind. He frequently used to be seen preparing his speeches sitting quietly as if sleeping, with his hat over his eyes, and, when the time came, delivering them word for word with the same effect as if they had been committed to writing and laboriously worked up and memorized from paper.

Hon. Edward Blake used to say that few men in Canada were more logical in argument and at the same time as forcible in expressing their views.

When the late Adam Crooks retired from the post of Minister of Education, the names of Hon. Richard Harcourt and myself were being thought of as successors. Mr. Ross's name, though Ross was at this time in the Commons, was also mentioned. Both Mr. Harcourt and myself most

willingly acquiesced in Mr. Ross's appointment in view that his long practical training admirably qualified him to fill such a position, and therefore, as a seat of this kind was open in the Legislature, the wisest course to adopt.

Experience proves that no one could have been appointed whose sympathies with the teaching profession were so genuine, and whose efforts to improve the financial interests of teachers were so strictly and persistently directed to that end.

The Ross Government has been strongly criticized (not particularly because of any fault on the part of the Premier, but because criticism of a government long in power was in order), indeed it has been charged with deliberately planning questionable schemes to keep itself in power. This I emphatically deny. It is absurd. Mr. Ross may have made some mistakes (and what public man has not) but from Ross's makeup he could not and would not countenance irregularity of a questionable kind. Indeed my strongest impression of him even to-day is his unimpeachable honesty of purpose in leadership and his strong desire to have all election laws strictly adhered to even if self interest had to be sacrificed.

Again, it has been said that Mr. Ross wished coalition government. My impression is that Sir George never approached the Leader of the Opposition to discuss Coalition. Any talk on that subject that did take place was of a merely casual

nature, but the Premier was not a party thereto, and the Leader of the Opposition was rather inclined to favor such a course.

There was no public debt in those days. It was simply a question of what was the amount of the Provincial surplus, and my recollection is very distinct, that when the Ross Government first thought of extending the Railway from North Bay away north to and westerly through the fertile regions of Northern Ontario, which had been carefully explored and favorably reported on, and when we decided on that course, our Premier being the first advocate thereof, we did so with some regret that the balance of our money surplus would have to disappear; but it would be difficult to mention any more important public work the Province ever undertook.

PETER MCARTHUR.

Let us go back to the days when politics were politics and when political meetings were worth going to.

Let us go back forty years or so to the days when "G.W." made stump speeches in West Middlesex, that are still remembered and quoted.

But perhaps you don't know who "G.W." was—or what those two initials stand for? Then you are not a West Middlesex Grit of the old school. Modern Liberals versed in political history may talk about "Sir George Ross," or "G. W. Ross," but the old hard-boiled Grit says "G.W." and

chuckles as he says it. And he is ready at a moment's notice to tell you about his battles on the stump and to quote his stories, and the hits with which he smashed his opponents. There are no stump speakers nowadays like "G.W.," and I doubt if there ever were many like him. He was perhaps the last and greatest of a type of political campaigner that has disappeared.

"G.W."—those initials are mixed up with my earliest recollections of politics. They come back to me as recurring in fierce arguments in Gaelic as well as in English. When there was a political meeting, the first question of every good Grit was, "Is G.W. going to speak?" If he was, you couldn't keep them away.

In those days politics were not as they are to-day. There were no women voters and women did not attend political meetings. Politics were entirely for men, and a fierce type of politics they were. Memory gives back glimpses of halls lit with coal-oil lamps, crowded to suffocation, and eager, bearded faces up-turned towards the bearded face on the platform. And there were hoarse voices that roared applause or howled with laughter.

It was not a time when soft-spoken candidates called meetings for their own followers where they could speak without interruption. No indeed! A political candidate in those brave days announced that he would hold a meeting in a town hall, schoolhouse or market place, and issued a challenge to all comers. Every political meeting

was a joint debate where hard blows were given and taken. The speaker of the evening seldom knew, until he reached the platform, who his opponent was to be or what his line of attack might be, and he had to be ready for every contingency.

Among the great campaigners of those stirring times "G.W." was easily first. It has been my privilege to hear some of the best stump speakers of the United States, Great Britain and Canada, and I have no hesitation in saying that "G.W." was without a peer. On the platform he was like a warrior armed. When mingling with the crowd he could not compare with many accomplished mixers I have known, but let him feel a platform under his feet, and he was a challenger who feared no opponent.

It was my good fortune to be present at some of his most notable debates. It would be unkind to bring up the names of his victims on those occasions, so necessarily my descriptions must lack something of the vividness they have in my memory.

I can still see "G.W." as he appeared in those days. He was not tall, but he was well set-up and as he advanced to the front of the platform he would button the lower buttons of his coat and look over his shoulder at his opponent. They used to say of John L. Sullivan that one-half of his pugilistic battles were won by the ferocious scowl he would cast at the other fighter when entering the ring.

"G.W.'s" tactics were different but equally effective. He had "a smile that was a breach of the peace." He could be kindly and patronizing to the point of insult.

As a rule he started things off with a crash. There was one occasion when a young lawyer went to one of "G.W.'s" meetings, and "G.W." had been delayed on the road—for those were also the days of bad roads. Seeing that the audience was waiting, the young man undertook to address it on the high principles of the Conservative party and to demolish the Hon. Edward Blake. While he was at the height of his eloquence "G.W." entered quietly at the back of the hall with his hat pulled down over his eyes. No one knew that he was there until the young man had finished his fiery oration. Then, "G.W." pushed up to the platform amid the deafening cheers of his waiting supporters. Buttoning his coat as usual he looked at the young man with a sarcastic smile and began. "This young man is no more like the Hon. Edward Blake than a singed cat is like a Royal Bengal tiger." That was enough. The crowd was at once howling and the young man was a picture of misery. Before the evening was over the "singed cat" comparison almost looked like a compliment.

There was another occasion when a particularly vociferous opponent roared for an hour or more trying to tear to pieces the political record of "G.W." He would pour forth oratory until he needed to pause for breath. Then he would stop

and take a drink of water from a pitcher that was conveniently placed on a table. Then there would be another roar of words and another drink of water. And so on through the evening.

When "G.W." got up he smiled at the audience, then smiled at his opponent and said "I am at a loss to-night, to know whether my opponent is run by wind or by water."

After a plunge like that "Even the ranks of Tuscany could scarce forbear to cheer."

Here is one of "G.W.'s" stories that they are still telling out in West Middlesex. In one campaign he had an opponent who had been employed by the rival candidate to follow him about the riding and debate with him at every meeting. "G.W." used to introduce this man at every meeting somewhat in this fashion: "They are so placed in this election that they are using their big, heavy-rifled guns elsewhere and they have sent a smooth bore to oppose me—'The Ingersoll Smooth Bore.'"

Then he would go on and explain that while his opponent was a fluent talker, he could seldom keep to the point.

"But you must keep to the point," he would say. "You must be like the old fellow who was sitting in the grocery store when a man came in from the back concessions in great distress. All of his buildings had been burned. When he was asked to tell how it had happened he explained: 'There was a big owl that was taking my hens, and last

night I saw it on the ridge-pole of the barn. So I took the old shot gun and rammed in a good load and wadded it down with newspaper. Then I sneaked around the stable until I got sight of that owl and I took aim and fired at him. But the wadding took fire and set fire to the straw stack and that set fire to the barn and the stables and the house, and burned up everything I owned.'

"Most of the people in the store sympathized with the man, and said so, but the old fellow I want to tell you about, he just emptied his mouth of tobacco juice into the front of the stove and asked, 'Did yeh hit the owl?'"

"Now that was the only man in the crowd who did not lose sight of the point; and I want you to watch my friend here to-night and see whether he hits the owl or not."

I remember another occasion when he started off by saying that his opponent's speech reminded him of "the black man who went into the dark cellar with an extinguished candle to look for a black cat that wasn't there."

Years afterwards I happened to meet Sir George Ross in Ottawa, and he invited me to dinner at the Senate restaurant. He was at that time in the Senate and no longer the gladiator of the political platform. I recalled to him some of these old battles, and it was easy to see that he relished the memory. When I repeated some of the stories that I remembered he told me that it was his habit to carry a note book in which he jotted down good

jokes that occurred to him, or that he heard or read. He would keep turning over in his mind and fitting them to different political ideas, so that they were ready to be used instantly in any debate. While nothing could be more spontaneous than the way in which he conducted his debates, I doubt if much was accidental. His important speeches were certainly carefully prepared, for on different occasions when I was a reporter on the Toronto *Mail*, he supplied me with advance copies. As his mind was thoroughly stored with good stories and their application throughout, it was hardly possible for a heckler to catch him off his guard.

It may as well be admitted that as a political debater he was not persuasive; but after he got through there was no question about the party to which any of his hearers belonged—he was either a Grit (and I can remember the relish with which he used to apply the name to himself and his followers)—a Grit full of pride and exultation, or else a Tory full of rage and hate.

It was notorious that no speaker who ever had a debate with "G.W." on the stump in West Middlesex ever came back for a second battle. At one nomination meeting a Conservative leader of great renown attended for the express purpose of destroying "G.W." His speech was a marvel of verbal assault and battery; but "G.W.'s" reply was so scathing that the other man left the platform and sought refuge among a group of his partisans at the door of the hall. He never came back. The one

debater, referred to above, who stood it through a whole campaign was himself a seasoned hand, accustomed to giving and taking punishment, and Senator Ross admitted to me that it was the fiercest campaign he had ever gone through. This opponent was the only one who had made him lose his temper on the platform. I was present on that occasion and can testify to the surprise of all his followers on finding that their champion could be made to drop his teasing smile and show ordinary wrath.

The only time I ever knew him to appear shy on the platform was on an occasion when he brought his leader, the Honourable Edward Blake, to speak for him. Mr. Blake gave a sound oration that was no doubt convincing and authoritative. All I can remember of it is that it lasted two hours and the hall was very hot. We cheered in a sagacious fashion and tried to convince ourselves that we were greatly impressed. When "G.W." got up he really seemed shy, and hesitated for a minute or two. Then came the old business of buttoning the lower buttons of his coat as he looked down at us and smiled. Presently he swung up on his toes and after his heels came down with a snap, to emphasize the first point that he scored, we changed at once into a mob of raging maniacs. For fifteen minutes he kept that weary crowd howling, raving and cheering at every point that he made. When the meeting was over every one who had been there—that is, every Grit—was ready to eat the Tories alive, not because of what

the Honourable Edward Blake had said, but because of the vim that "G.W." showed when he took the platform.

But it will not do to leave the impression that "G.W." was only at his best when on the stump in his own riding. I remember that when he was Minister of Education, the American Association for the Advancement of Science met in Toronto. As I was acting in the dual capacity of a student at University College and a reporter on the *Mail*, I was in touch with the arrangements that were being made to welcome the scientists. Owing to his position as Minister of Education, it was Mr. Ross's duty to make the address of welcome. In University circles there was much discontent about this arrangement. The feeling was expressed freely that this rough and ready stump speaker was not the man to represent the educational institutions of Canada on such an occasion.

But there was a surprise waiting for them. When Mr. Ross stepped out on the platform of the old Convocation Hall he delivered an address of welcome that was a model of courtesy and eloquence. He captivated the Association entirely, and I can still see the beaming countenance of President Mendenhall as he listened to the gracefully turned compliments and the inspiring words of the speaker of the day.

After it was over the grumblers of the University admitted that they had been overwhelmed. They never expected anything of the kind.

In this connection I shall quote from a letter which I received a couple of days ago from one of our "Elder Statesmen." He was indulging in reminiscence and gave this interesting glimpse of Mr. Ross, which shows that besides being the ruthless debater of West Middlesex, he was able to shine in any gathering of orators:

"The first real sign that the flowing tide was with Laurier and Liberalism was shown at a meeting in Massey Hall, Toronto, on February 5th, 1895. The chief speakers upon that occasion were Laurier, Ross and Patterson.

"All three aroused much enthusiasm, but as Ross appeared at his best that night his address was the event of the evening, and it was not a passing emotion as you may yet gather by reading the speech.

"More than once Ross dealt with a declaration made by Laurier upon a former occasion in the following words:

"'Let us resolve that never shall we introduce into this country the disputes and quarrels that have drenched Europe in blood.'

"As Ross concluded the reading of these words he said: 'A noble resolve, worthy of the man, and it is to be hoped worthy of the country on whose behalf it was made.'"

In conclusion I wish to record the fact that "G.W." left with me one regret. On one occasion of political stress he said to me confidentially, when I was interviewing him: "I would like to have one hour in which I would not be responsible to either the past or the future, in which to tell just what I think of a number of men in Canadian public life."

Knowing just what he could do, even when burdened with a sense of responsibility, I have always wondered just what that speech would have been like. There certainly would have been "hides on the fence," if it had been delivered.

DR. F. W. MERCHANT.

Sir George Ross influenced education through direct personal contact with workers, through his educational addresses, and through his policy as Minister of Education; it is difficult to say to which of these factors we owe most.

His relations with the personal forces in education were wide and intimate. His office, when Minister of Education, was always open to trustees, inspectors, and teachers, and they were encouraged to take full advantage of opportunities to visit him. When the routine business of the Department appeared to suffer, one was prone to question the advisability of giving up so much time to these interviews, but doubtless very much of the work accomplished during his administration was the result of these informal conferences which kept him in close touch with the field, and directed and inspired the workers.

Space will not permit me to analyze Sir George Ross's gifts or art as an orator. The most remarkable characteristic, probably, is the extent and the permanency of the effects of his speeches. One meets evidences of this everywhere. A few days ago a man came to my office to discuss an educa-

tional question. "The idea," he said, "I got from a speech delivered by the Honourable Mr. Ross at the opening of the Owen Sound Collegiate Institute." And turning to me, he added, "Do you remember that speech? It was wonderful." The central idea of the speech had evidently remained with him for thirty-six years, and his efforts were still being quickened by its inspiration.

Again the limitations of my space prevent me from entering upon a discussion of Mr. Ross's educational policy as Minister of Education. It is sufficient to say that amidst all the multiplicity of the details of the administration of a complex Department, he never lost sight of the fact that the teacher is the most important factor in determining the efficiency of an educational system. Accordingly, his efforts centred mainly in providing for the Province a well-equipped and devoted teaching force, and the provisions made for securing and maintaining such a force are the direct development of the ideals and the plans adopted during his administration.

Those of us who were associated with him in the work of the Department of Education hold at the highest value the memory of our personal relations with him. I remember best, possibly, the details of my first interview with him. As a boy from the fifth form of a public school, I appeared at my first examination for a teacher's certificate, and Inspector Ross was the examiner in reading. With book in hand I approached him in fear and trem-

bling. At a glance he appreciated the situation, and with a few kindly enquiries regarding my school and my studies, put me at my ease. When I had finished reading he added a few words of commendation and advice. His kindness made a deep impression upon me at the time, but I came to appreciate later that this sympathetic attitude of thoughtfulness always characterized his relations with others.

W. G. JORDAN.

The story of the public career and official service of George W. Ross stands written in the Parliamentary records of the Dominion and specially of Ontario, as well as in the books that came from his own pen. Young politicians of to-day may draw both instruction and inspiration from the pages of that interesting review of his life "Getting Into Parliament and After." The writer of this brief note appreciates the privilege of being allowed to pay a personal tribute to one who served Canada and the Empire so well, and who was recognized both during his lifetime and after his death as one of the most gifted men of his generation He had left Strathroy before I took up my residence there in 1890, but I soon heard of him as a leading figure in the political world, as one deeply interested in the varied educational institutions of the Province, as well as in the larger range of Dominion affairs. Coming from the old land I was, of course, ignorant of Canada's history and its particular problems,

but I knew that in any country the way of the politician is not easy, and the loftier his ideals the more difficult are the demands upon his strength, skill, tact and consistency. As one who was for a time a member of his constituency, I can understand the pride and gratitude with which he looked back upon the honor of the thirty-five years of loyal support received from the electors of West Middlesex. Mere fidelity to party does not account completely for the enthusiastic loyalty which stood the severe strain of all the changeful years through good and ill report. Though what I have to say mainly concerns his power on the public platform, I must add that when I met him privately in Strathroy, Toronto or Ottawa, I always found a certain charm in his personality, something that is real in its power, though difficult to analyze. He could show kindness without patronage and could manifest a keen interest in subjects that were not in his own special line. In his daring and ambitious youth I did not know him, but I feel that the ability, diligence and public-spirit displayed during his long career, and the patience and fortitude with which he bore pain in his later years are worthy to be remembered and admired.

George W. Ross was destined by nature to be an effective public speaker. Very early in his career he saw that in this democratic age a man who seeks to guide and serve his fellow-citizens must acquire the art of presenting his ideas in an attractive, convincing form. He had the natural gifts without

which success in that line is difficult, if not impossible. He had a good voice, a tenacious memory, an extensive vocabulary, a lively imagination, an easy, fluent style, and an impressive, but not an oppressive, personality. At first glance this may seem to be a complete equipment, but he knew quite well that it was not. Men have had all this and yet made a comparative failure through lack of hard study, study of books and men, and of long, painful practice. There are public men who do good work in addressing both deliberative and popular assemblies; they are faithful and conscientious because of a high sense of duty. A man in G. W. Ross's position often had to speak as a matter of duty and sometimes had to make the best of a difficult situation. In his greatest efforts, however, it was evident that through careful toil speech had become a pleasure. When speech, because of interest in a great subject and the exhilaration of facing an important audience, becomes pleasure to the speaker, it is a joy to the hearers. What he tells us of his feeling when he went to London to hear D'Arcy McGee, in 1865, reveals an interest that remained with him all his life, that influenced his own studies and his criticism of others: "I had no preconception of oratory as a fine art or what were its essential elements. I had a vague idea, however, that there was something in it beyond the reach of ordinary mortals, which, if not exactly supernatural, had a spark of divine power or sanctity peculiarly the gift of the gods."

In the volume already referred to he has given descriptions of many orators and debaters in a style that not only shows keenness of observation and fairness in criticism, but that also makes it clear that the writer regards the subject as of the highest importance. He knew that political oratory had played a great part in the life of the English-speaking people. At present there is a tendency to despise oratory and to think that the supreme effort of human speech is a calm business-like statement free from the tinsel of rhetoric and the gush of shallow sentimentalism. Certainly clear thought and absolute sincerity are essential, but if we lose the atmosphere and outlook created by the real orator, much of life's poetry and romance will have vanished.

In November, 1897, an "Old Boys' Re-Union and Banquet" was held in Strathroy; the programme, as it lies before me, gives not only the names of local celebrities but also of many natives of the town and district who have since distinguished themselves in larger spheres. The chief speakers of the evening were Edward Blake and G. W. Ross. The speech of the former had a special significance in that it seemed to indicate that the speaker was finally severing his connection with Canadian politics and that what was left of his life work would be devoted to British politics and the Irish cause. Somewhere, no doubt, the speeches are recorded, but after a quarter of a century, all that is left to the hearer is "an impression" of the two men and

their different styles. This is not the place for an elaborate comparison. As Ross responded to the toast of "Canada," and Blake to that of "Our Honored Guest and The Imperial Parliament," the contrast was striking. I enjoyed both speeches, but it was clear that Edward Blake, one of the greatest men that Canada has produced, was more fitted, by his great learning and peculiar type of mind, to be a great judge than a party leader or popular orator. It is not necessary to enlarge on the warmth of feeling, the wealth of knowledge, the variety of illustration that Ross could bring to this patriotic theme. He did not play to the gallery and he was not above the heads of his hearers, but he kindled real enthusiasm as he spoke of the storied past and living present.

Six years later he attended the Convocation of Queen's University in connection with the Installation of Principal D. M. Gordon, when he, with other public men, received the honorary degree of LL.D., and also spoke at the banquet in the evening. I was present at both meetings, and, on account of my former connection with Strathroy and friendship with his family, was specially interested in his appearance. Among a crowd of distinguished men he held an honoured place, not only because of his official position, but by his pleasing personality and attractive eloquence. Here is the modest notice that appeared in the students' *Journal:* "The Hon. G. W. Ross next spoke. He began in a humourous strain which occasioned much laughter, saying

that he represented the Ontario Legislature, which was the most evenly balanced in the country. Speaking of the functions of the Legislature, he said, 'It must not be extravagant. If it were, what would become of the surplus, the various Provincial Institutions and the Kingston School of Mines?' He went on then to speak very favourably of the necessity of a university encouraging original research, and training men to take a worthy place in the political life of the country." This is a bald statement, but suggestive to those who knew the current and subsequent history. Even the joke about "the surplus" is not quite dead. Since then the School of Mines has become The Science Faculty of Queen's University, and has received more adequate aid. The need of encouragement for research work is now more clearly recognized. According to my recollection it was a great speech, setting the particular points in a large framework of history, rhetorical in the best sense—literary allusions and poetical quotations appropriate and in good taste.

It is the substance and not merely the style that makes the orator, though it may be true in a sense that "the style is the man." Whether it would have been better for himself and the country for G. W. Ross to have remained in the arena of Dominion politics one cannot say with any certainty. But one thing is certain, he was determined that though his strength was to be given to administrative work in one Province, he would not allow

his vision to be circumscribed, so as to become merely local and parochial. He believed in friendship with the United States, loyalty to the British Empire, and, at the same time, desired that Canada should develop its own life in its own way and thus play a real part in the world.

As a fair specimen both of his style and spirit, the following passage is worthy of repetition—a clear survey, simple and strong, by a man who, while confessing human weakness and limitation, felt that honest work justifies an honourable pride.

"We had to meet the expectations of a young, virile and progressive Province, that felt the pulsations of enterprise and development in all its industries, and to whom the future beckoned with a broadening smile. Old foundations had to be removed for the deeper and broader foundations of the new era on which we had entered. The swaddling clothes of childhood had to be cast aside, and the young giant fitted for an arena of larger activity in which he was to show his prowess. Transportation for the products of the farm and the lumbermen had to be provided. Asylums and hospitals and reformatories were required for suffering or degenerate humanity. The agriculturist called for scientific instruction in the management of farm and dairy; the educationist, for the regeneration of our school system, from the log schoolhouse to the university; the lawyer, for the removal of ancient forms which delayed justice and confused the court; the social reformer, for the protection of the life and health of the toiler who earned his bread amid the dust and roar of smoking factories. These thirty long years of constructive legislation demanded the utmost vigilance and forethought. What we achieved is an open book, and he

who runs may read. We had our full share of honour and many tokens of public confidence. We gave to the public years of service, most of which was gratefully appreciated. We attempted no spectacular flights in financial legislation. We made no pretence to personal superiority because we were the chosen leaders of the people. We neither considered ourselves indispensable as public servants nor more competent than many whose names were on the waiting list. We had our day, and there was no sadness of farewell when we stepped back into the ranks of private citizenship."

David Evans.

Editor at one time of the Strathroy Age, President of the Liberal Association, and now Postmaster of Strathroy.

Because I had the good fortune to know intimately the late Sir George W. Ross as far back as the year 1869 the author of this biography has requested me to give my impressions of that great statesman. This I deem at once an honour and a privilege.

Just here I am thinking of him particularly as a man moving among his fellows. Possessed as he was of a strong mentality and most unusual versatility, we remember him ever for his large-hearted friendliness, his exceeding kindness, his dauntless courage and his patriotic fervour. So well-balanced a character we seldom find. As rural school teacher, as newspaper editor, as school inspector, as moral reformer and lecturer in the cause of temperance, as parliamentarian, as Minister of Education, as Elder in the Kirk and superintendent in the Sunday school, as Premier of this Province

and latterly as member of the Senate—all these he filled with rare dignity and efficiency.

Do we wonder, then, that his services were constantly in demand? His magnetic presence was a stimulus to any meeting. He was always ready to help, and with unflagging zeal he gave cheerfully of his best on all occasions, from the least to the greatest. And after he had given a masterly address in the Republic to the south of us, the query was made: "Are there any more in Ontario like him?" So he was greeted everywhere.

The writer likes to revel in the memories of the good old days when political opponents met on the hustings to debate the burning questions of the day. Sir George loved a tilt. His ready repartee was far-famed, but after the battle was over this great man was always big enough to meet his opponent with a smile and a braw good morning. On all occasions he was able to win and retain the respect of his adversaries, who were also proud to claim him as their representative. His ideals were so high that he conducted the cleanest of campaigns—ever seeking that his constituents be an intelligent electorate. So he was once and always an educator.

With his great oratorical ability, and outstanding powers of leadership, his rise was rapid, till finally he became more than a national figure, So that to-day his name adds lustre to the pages of Canadian history.

Such a life should be an inspiration to the youth of this fair Dominion. A self-made man, whose tireless energy and infinite capacity for hard work, for he,

> While his companions slept,
> Was toiling upwards in the night,

reached some of the highest places in the gift of his country.

Sunnyside Cottage,
Strathroy, Ont.

The following tributes were paid at the time of, or subsequent to, Sir George W. Ross's death:

The Ross Clan.

In March, 1911, George W. Ross was chosen as first president of the Ross Clan in America The following resolution was adopted at the fourth annual gathering, held at New York, May 23rd, 1914: "Moved by Senator Leonard Ross, President of the Society, and resolved, that the members of the Clan Ross Society, in gathering assembled, record their deep sense of the loss sustained by Clan Ross in America through the death of its first president, Sir George Ross. Full of years and honour, a great and good man has passed away. Worthily honoured by his king with the degree of knighthood; honoured by the people of his Province and of the Dominion with the highest places of trust within their power to bestow;

statesman, journalist, author, orator; resourceful in debate, and resolute in action; a member at various times of the House of Commons, the Ontario Legislature and the Senate; Minister of Education, Premier of Ontario, and, at the time of. his death, Liberal leader in the Dominion Senate, Sir George Ross, during a long and strenuous life, had done a man's work in the service of his country, ably discharging every trust and duty conferred upon him by a grateful constituency.

Among the first to offer encouragement to the organization of the Clan Ross Society, and its president from the time of its foundation until his death, Sir George will ever be remembered by us as one whose leadership was ever-present inspiring to higher thoughts, "to nobler deeds, and to purer actions."

THE LIBERAL ASSOCIATION, WEST MIDDLESEX.

He was part of our very life. The source of our inspiration, the embodiment of our ideal; the pride and glory of our citizens. His many years' residence here, during which time he went in and out amongst us, have endeared him to the people of our town and we shall fondly cherish the memory of one who, in winning distinction for himself reflected honour upon us. For thirty-five years he served us with pre-eminent ability in the Councils of the nation, and his brilliant career shed glory and lustre upon the constituency of West Middlesex.

Hon. N. W. Rowell.

In the record of his life, to my mind one of the most interesting and touching incidents is the devotion of his old constituents to himself and his devotion to his constituents. It is not without interest to note that in the book he has just written, he has dedicated it to his old constituents of West Middlesex.

> The bridegroom may forget the bride
> Was made his wedded wife yestreen:
> The monarch may forget the crown
> That on his head an hour has been:
> The mither may forget the bairn
> That smiles so sweetly on her knee—
> But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
> And a' that thou hast done for me.

Senator Bostock.

By the decease of Sir George Ross, Canada loses one of her sons who has done her great service and who had a strong grasp of the important questions of the day as they affected her welfare.

Although his most important work was done for the Province of Ontario, the *influence of it has been felt in the Province of British Columbia where the system of education of Ontario has been largely used as a basis.*

Sir James Whitney.

Although not unexpected, the announcement of the death of Sir George Ross conveys a shock to the people of this Province. Very few of the public

men of Ontario were better known to the people. He was one of the ablest men our Province has produced—a man of great force of character and at all times a sturdy defender of the British connection, and a very prominent figure in our public life. He will be missed indeed. His widow and the other members of the family have the warm sympathy of the entire community in their great bereavement.

SENATOR LOUGHEED.

Few men possessed more personal charm than the late Sir George W. Ross. His personality was one that peculiarly summoned in his behalf the affection of those who came into contact with him, and notwithstanding the fact that for years he was the victim of physical affliction from rheumatism which would have overwhelmed most men, we always found him taking a particularly cheerful outlook upon life.

SENATOR JAFFRAY.

I have known Sir George W. Ross intimately for many years both in his public capacity and as a personal friend. Every one will admit his great ability. With few, if any equals as a platform speaker he was a stalwart Canadian and a staunch Imperialist, who devoted his great talents to the service of his country. Under the greatest difficulties as Premier of Ontario *he accomplished more than perhaps any other man who has occupied that position, considering his short time in office.*

The Toronto "Globe."

Sir George Ross is gone. His was a full and strenuous life. His death removes from the arena of public affairs a man of more varied gifts, activities and experiences than any other present-day Parliamentarian, teacher, school inspector, author, orator; resourceful in debate, resolute in action. Looking back over his career the first thing to compel attention is his triumph over physical disability that could have sent many a man whimpering to the retirement of chronic invalidism. Sir George faced the racking pain of rheumatism with invincible optimism and courage, and to the very end, when he could scarcely sign his own name, made light of his great affliction, and his mental vigor caused those with whom he came in contact to forget his physical weakness. The quality of mind that so served him is given to few. The outstanding feature of the political creed of Sir George Ross was stalwart Canadianism. He was an Imperialist, but always a Canada-first Imperialist. Those more intimately acquainted with the views of Senator Ross as to the relation which ought to be maintained between the Motherland and the overseas Dominions, knew that he was unalterably opposed to anything which would trench or even seem to trench upon Canadian self-government and the equality of Canadians within the Empire.

Directors of the Toronto "Globe."

Resolved, that the Directors of the Globe Printing Company place upon record their deep sense of the loss sustained by Canada, and by all the public bodies and institutions with which he was connected, through the death of Sir George Ross. They desire to pay tribute, in company with his fellow-countrymen, throughout the Dominion to the zeal and whole-souled devotion exhibited by Sir George in the performance of his manifold public duties. Especially do they hold in grateful remembrance his labour to secure and preserve for Canada an assured place as a self-governing nation within the Empire. His was the true conception of Imperialism, and for it he was prepared at all times to raise an eloquent voice or bring into service a facile pen. The directors wish to record also their acknowledgment of the great services rendered to his native Province by Sir George, as Premier, in the exploration of the Northland, in the opening up of the clay belt and in the construction of the Temiskaming Railway as a publicly-owned transportation system. During fifteen years of his active service in the Legislature he was a director of the *Globe*. In all that time he conducted himself with such unfailing courtesy, forbearance and consideration for others, as to add greatly to the esteem in which he was held by all.

Rev. Dr. James Milligan.

He was a character of stellar and undiminishable greatness. "His aim was always to conquer," and besides being an accurate and fluent speaker he was a striking figure and exponent of manly force. His motive force he applied to his daily life and his natural probity, combined with his insight into all questions affecting the welfare of the people inspired respect. He was an accomplished legislator who never shirked his duty and his interesting career should be a lesson for the old as well as the young men to cultivate a feeling that they have a controlling, happy future before them. His love for work was inexhaustible. He lived the life of a Christian.

Right Rev. Bishop Sweeny.

The death of the late Senator Ross removed a man of strong character and personality from the public life of Canada. In political life Senator Ross possessed outstanding characteristics that are necessary in public life; he was a politician of the strictest type, sterling worth and character, strong convictions and an educator who convinced his admirers with great sincerity. I came into contact with the late Senator very frequently through his connection with the Empire Club, and I always listened with great interest and profit to his splendid speeches. He was out and out an Imperialist and his utterances on this subject have, no doubt, been productive of good results in the interests of the Empire.

Rural Dean Robinson, St. John's Church, Strathroy.

Sir George Ross was a man that had an experience that no one else had. He represented the community in which he was born. He was respected by people who knew him from childhood, trusted and admired by them. That man was more than a common man. He had something besides his great gift of eloquence which all acknowledged. He must have been honest and honourable to be capable of holding friendships for a lifetime. When he passed away not only his friends were losers but the whole community as well. His enthusiasm and indomitable perseverance carried him through many a hard fight and his vigor and alertness of intellect, the fire of his Highland ancestry, contributed to make him a dominant personality in every stage of his public career.

Hon. J. J. Foy.

He was most industrious and untiring in his public work; an excellent debater and splendid speaker, arising when occasion demanded to real eloquence. Though politically a hard hitter and severe in his attacks, this did not interfere with pleasant personal relations with his opponents, and I have many kindly recollections of him. His patience when suffering from indifferent health, was a trait that distinguished him and commanded admiration.

Appendix.

CHRONOLOGY IN THE LIFE OF SIR GEORGE W. ROSS.

1841—Born three miles from the village of Nairn, township of East Williams, Middlesex, Ontario.
1847—Went to the home school.
1857—Began to teach.
1862—Married Christina Campbell.
1864—Campaign in behalf of Temperance.
1871—Appointed Public School Inspector of East Lambton, Petrolia and Strathroy.
1872—Elected member of the House of Commons.
1875—Married Catherine Boston.
1876-1880—Member of the Central Committee of Examiners.
1879—Elected Most Worthy Patriarch of the Sons of Temperance of North America.
1879—Matriculated.
1883—Graduated from Albert College, Belleville, and received degree of LL.D.
1887—Called to the Bar of his native Province.
1867—Political Initiation.
1867—Editor of Strathroy *Age*.
1869—Attended Normal School, Toronto.
1877—Model School Inspector.
1883—Began work as Minister of Education.
1886—Canadian Representative at the British and Colonial Exhibition, London, England, and to Temperance Congress, London.
1896—Elected Vice-President of the Ontario Prohibitory Alliance.
1896—Elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. One of the Commissioners chosen to revise the Statutes of Ontario.

1897—Elected Vice-President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.
1896—Chosen delegate from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada to the Pan-Presbyterian Conference in Glasgow, and
1898—Delegated to the one in New York.
1897—Member of the Interprovincial Conference at Quebec.
1899-1905—Premier of Ontario and Provincial Treasurer.
1899-1901—President of Canadian Authors' Society.
1900-1914—Director of the Globe Printing Company.
1902—Present at the coronation of King Edward and Queen Alexandra by special invitation.
1905—President of the Canadian Manufacturers' Life Insurance Company.
1905—Married Mildred Peel.
1907-1914—Member of the Senate.
1911—President of Ross Clan in America.
1913—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate.
Vice-President of the Toronto Branch of the British Empire League.
Vice-President of the Lord's Day Alliance.
President of the Dominion Educational Association, of which he was one of the founders.
Member of the Council of Toronto Astronomical and Physical Society.

HONORS.

1888—Received Honorary degree of LL.D. from St. Andrew's University, Scotland.
1892—Victoria University, Cobourg.
1894—Toronto University.
1902—McMaster University.
1903—Queen's University.
1910—Knighted by King George.

ROSS'S CABINET.

Hon. J. M. Gibson—Attorney-General.
Hon. E. J. Davis—Commissioner of Crown Lands.
Hon. Richard Harcourt—Minister of Education.
Hon. John Dryden—Provincial Secretary.
Hon. F. L. Latchford—Commissioner of Public Works.
Hon. J. T. Garrow—without portfolio.
Hon. William Harty, without portfolio.
In 1904—Gibson, Davis and Stratton retired, their places being filled by:
Hon. F. L. Latchford—Attorney-General.
Hon. A. G. McKay—Commissioner of Crown Lands.
Hon. C. P. Graham—Provincial Secretary.
Hon. W. A. Charlton—Commissioner of Public Works.
Hon. A. E. Evanturel, without portfolio.

The men with whom Sir George W. Ross most closely, associated were: Sir Oliver Mowat, Hon. T. B. Border, Mr. C. F. Fraser, Hon. A. S. Hardy, Sir John Gibson, Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, Hon. Edward Blake, Sir Wilfred Laurier. Members of the Senate: Hon. James A. Lougheed, Hon. David Mills, Sir Richard Scott, Sir Richard Cartwright, W. G. Jaffray.

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